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# THE MEANING OF CHILDREN IN THE LIVES OF ADULTS: A HERMENEUTIC STUDY

by

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DAVID GEOFFREY SMITH

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submitted by David Geoffrey Smith
in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
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# ABSTRACT

The concern of this study is the meaning of children in the lives of adults. Attention is given to the way the question of ontological meaning is eclipsed in the dominant traditions of child study, such that reflection about children has become separated off from adult self-reflection. The study attempts to show how living with children most fundamentally takes the form of a dialogue, in which the ontological horizons of adult and child become linked in an eternal conversation.

The study has five basic thrusts. In the first, a critique of the underlying epistemology of contemporary child study is given. The argument is made that the positivistic origins of the field essentially render children as objects, suitable for scientific investigation and social manipulation, perhaps, but cut off from any necessary connection with the broader adult community. Secondly, the question of the nature of human understanding is raised, as a prelude to asking what it could mean to claim an understanding of children. The historical rise of the hermeneutic tradition is traced with the intention of showing the genesis of the central issues in interpretive social science. Friedrich Schleiermacher, Wilhelm Dilthey, Martin Heidegger, and Hans-Georg Gadamer are discussed as seminal figures.

A third interest is to discern how the key insights of the hermeneutic tradition bear on the conduct and interpretation of life-world research. The nature of human questioning and conversation is explored, particularly from the perspective of Gadamer's hermeneutic of the Platonic dialogues. This leads to the fourth aspect of the study which is a series of conversations with adults involved with children in both conventional and less conventional circumstances. For example, two unmarried teenage mothers-to-be are spoken with, as well as parents in a more traditional nuclear family. Representing people involved with children not their own, are five educators. All conversations are edited then reconstructed as a form of narrative text from which to show forms of ontological disclosure apparent within the speaking.

The ontological pointings, as they are referred to, form the basis of the fifth aspect of the study, which is an experiment in the art of hermeneutic writing. Hermeneutic writing, as a form of poetic, draws from the ideational character of human speaking and attempts to show what it is that is spoken through speech. As a poetic, it presents itself explicitly as one-sided, as an invitation to others to become engaged dialogically in that of which it speaks. Four themes or clusters are developed hermeneutically from the research conversations. These include "The Insistent Voice" of children in the adult experience; children as eliciting adult reflection on "The Need for a Place"; "The Speaking of the Generations and the Sense of What is Right"; and "Extending Oneself, Watching Children Grow, Reaching Kids." The experience of the educators is discussed separately.

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VITA 374

A child is the beginning of a revolution
.... But you must have the believing
and prophetic eye.

Ralph Waldo Emerson

# CHAPTER I

# INTRODUCTION

> Today, when the 'science of childhood' has come of age, we have become obsessed with the unqualified separateness of this period of life.
>
> Valerie Polokow Suransky[1]

> We have begun to realize how little we really understand about children and what is crucial in their up-bringing. Even defining the beginning of a child's life seems to elude us.
>
> Deborah Lott Holmes and Frederick J. Morrison[2]

> Wherever it arises, the problem of the beginning is, in fact, the problem of the end. For it is with respect to an end that a beginning is defined as a beginning of an end. For every beginning is an end, and every end is a beginning.
>
> Hans-Georg Gadamer[3]

> All interpretation places the interpreter *in medias res* and never at the beginning or the end. We suddenly arrive, as it were, in the middle of a conversation which has already begun and in which we try to orient ourselves in order to be able to contribute to it.
>
> Paul Ricoeur[4]

In this study four basic issues are addressed, each of which finds a voice in the fragments quoted above. The first points to an emerging conviction in some quarters that the ways in which children are thought about, particularly in North American academic circles and at the level of public policy, reflects an understanding of children which has them removed from any living connection with the broader human community. This does not mean there has been an absence of professed concern for children. Quite the contrary. But it does seem that, almost without exception, such concern has presupposed an understanding of the constitution of children, and of childhood, which is sealed off from any meaningful engagement within the self-reflection of the adult community at large. As the Dutch philosopher and psychiatrist, J. H. van den Berg has put it in The Changing Nature of Man:

> The child has become a child. The child today has become separated from everything belonging to the adult's life. Nowadays, two separate states of human life can be distinguished: the state of maturity, with all the very mature attributes belonging to it, like birth, death, faith, and sexuality; and the state of immaturity, which lacks these attributes.[5]

How this state of affairs has come into being has been explored most eloquently by van den Berg himself in the work just cited, but also by the history of childhood school precipitated by Phillippe Aries' Centuries of Childhood, in 1960.[6] It is a condition that can be observed in the plethora of both popular and scholarly literature concerning child-rearing, parent-effectiveness, teaching methods, manuals, etc. which adorns the shelves of libraries and bookstores. The domination of the field of child study by behaviourist and developmental traditions in psychology is apparent at every turn, such that living with a child is understood almost always as a concern for how a child is to be a child according to fore-ordained adult prescriptions about what a child is.

To take one example: Gerald R. Patterson's Living with Children,[7] a commercially very successful manual now into its fourth edition, and subtitled "New Methods for Parents and Teachers". The subtitle underscores the basic interest of the book, which is to provide technical advice on how children can be trained to respond adequately to adult determinations of what is appropriate child behaviour. Chapter titles include: "What Are Reinforcers?"; "How Can We Use Reinforcers?"; "Children Train Parents" (i.e., children manipulate parents for their own purposes); "Time Out: Punishment for Little People"; "Retraining"; etc. Areas deemed to typically pose problems for parents and teachers include "Non-compliance" and "The Coercive Child." Remedies for dealing with such undesirable behaviour on the part of children are enthusiastically proposed.

Patterson's inclination may, perhaps, be somewhat extreme, but his basic characterization is in tune with the field generally; i.e., it reflects what van den Berg names as a "state of emergency"[8] in adult-child relations. The public grasping for advice on how to parent, how to teach, how to care for children, gives expression to a sense of collapse in "natural understanding"[9] between old and young. In the more academic literature, it is possible to detect a growing awareness of the inherent poverty of the traditional child study paradigms which leave reflection about children distinct from adult self-reflection. In a recent doctoral dissertation on children of divorced parents, for example, Ann Wood remarks at the conclusion of her work that, after all had been said and made explicit about the lives of children in such situations, it was, in the end, "impossible to talk about the children of the study without talking about the parents."[10] The comment of Holmes and Morrison cited at the outset of this chapter points to how a pure concentration on The Child leaves one, after all the conventional models of discourse have been displayed, with the uneasy feeling that somehow, an "understanding" of what is "crucial" in the "up-bringing" of children is still missing. Holmes and Morrison despair over the elusiveness of defining "even the beginning of a child's life."

From another point of view, however, such despair may mark a hopeful turn, for as Gadamer suggests in our opening quotation, "the problem of the beginning is, in fact, the problem of the end." Dieter Misgeld puts the matter more squarely into the centre of the topic under discussion: "An interest in children is not independent from an interest in establishing for ourselves who we are, as adults, and what we must orient to in order to live our adulthood."[11] What is more, he asks, "how could we interrogate ourselves and what we are as adults...without constantly regenerating for ourselves how we may be, even are, as children are."[12] Children are, even as we are, and we are as children are. There is a fundamental unity inherent in our lives together with children which, as adults, we violate at the risk of giving up on our own regeneration.

Of course, there is a sense in which this unity between ourselves and our children is something of which we are already intuitively aware, and which, at the level of every-day experience, we know well. We only have to think of how tied up we are with our children on a day to day basis--with taking care of their basic needs, driving them back and forth to school, gym classes, music lessons, baseball games, etc. And we find ourselves wondering all the time if we are doing well by them, as parents or as teachers. We wonder if we are doing the 'right' things. Similarly, we are reminded of ourselves constantly when we observe our children imitating us, for example, or when we see our own physical characteristics reappear quite suddenly, perhaps when the sun catches our child's face for the first time in a certain way. Indeed, we assume a fundamental commonality with our children by the very fact that we converse with them in a common language, for in its essence, language assumes the possibility of mutual understanding between us all.

The separation of young and old, then, is a formal affair; i.e., it is a condition which has developed through a dense complex of social, cultural, and intellectual antecedents to take centre stage in public deliberations. But prior to such deliberation is a knowing that children are flesh of our flesh, bone of our bone. The very animation which infuses most public talk about children, at home and school meetings, for example, or in the media whenever the topic of "education" comes up, speaks loudly of the way in which our investments in children lie far deeper than the pocket book. Rather, they speak of a tacit acknowledgement that in a deep and mysterious way we are our children and that even when separated from us, they are us, they re-present us in the world.

To say these things is to open up what is the fundamental interest of this study, which is to restore to the centre of public conversation about children what we already know to be the case in our pre-reflective experience with them. Pre-reflectively we somehow know that living with children in a genuine way, in a way which allows our relations with them to be truly living, has more the character of a profound conversation than a bold plan to shape our children to objectively predetermined ends.

A genuine conversation is not something which already has its end in view at its beginning. Rather it sustains its vitality at every moment along its faltering way, a way which cannot be determined in advance but only as it is negotiated, so to speak, in the midst of a mutually unfolding vision. So too, the most important questions about children cannot be concerned with children's origin, not with utopian plans for their final destiny, because neither of those is within our power to answer in any objective sense. What we do know, however, is that each of us is born into a world, into a situation, into a conversation which already exists. We all live, as Paul Ricoeur put it: "*in medias res*, and never at the beginning or the end." It is into the middle of this ongoing human conversation that we arrive, and it is in the middle of it, too, that we try to orient ourselves--for ourselves, and with our children. Our orientation in the world is something that emerges conversationally with all around us, but perhaps with none more primordially than with our children. The purpose of this study, then, is to open up the living conversation that exists between adults and children; to make it more explicitly central to our reflection of what children are in our adult experience. As such, this work is an exercise in hermeneutical inquiry; that is, it attempts to show what Gadamer describes as "the conversation which we ourselves are."[13]

In recent years, the subject of hermeneutics has assumed an increasingly prominent place in social science circles. From its ancient origins in the interpretation of classical and religious texts, hermeneutics has come to be regarded, since the work of Wilhelm Dilthey in the nineteenth century, as holding particular import for questions surrounding the nature of human understanding, the meaning of interpretation, and the role of interpretation in life-world investigation. In the social sciences generally, however, the interest in hermeneutics has taken on a largely schizoid character. That is, within the field of sociology, for example, the concern has been primarily an asking for how the insights of the hermeneutic tradition can inform reflection on the traditional discourse of the field.[14] As such, hermeneutics has remained largely at the level of meta-theory, without reference to the more concrete concerns of life-world investigation.

In the latter instance, i.e., a pursuit of deeper interpretive understanding in life-world research, the deficit has been a distinct absence of genuine hermeneutic reflectiveness, such that what is often passed off as a "hermeneutic approach" to the "human sciences", as practiced in field research, is, in fact, only marginally so.[15] For as will become evident as this study proceeds, hermeneutic inquiry finds its home not in a set of objectivated practices and procedures but in an attentiveness to that home of all human life, which is language itself. Hermeneutics, whether as the art of interpretation, or as a mode (the mode) of social understanding, is concerned most essentially with a bringing to language that which lies hidden in all human endeavour; that is, the eternal voice, the logos, as it reaches out across space and time uniting all who dare to speak.

The desire in this study is to show the hermeneutic way hermeneutically, not only as it pertains to its own self--understanding as tradition, but also as it points to new possibilities for opening what lies at the heart of human experience in the world, our special case here being the experience of living with children. Human life itself, in the full richness of its diversity and vitality, is hermeneutic through and through. To be human is to search for understanding of what it is to be human; it is to be engaged in a living dialogue with all those, past and present, whose voices, though perhaps at times strange and alien, resonate and echo with our own voices in whatever circumstance serves as the locale of our sense-making.

To be engaged hermeneutically in any search for understanding requires not only a hearing of what it is that people in various ways and conditions say about their concerns at hand (Chapter V), but it also requires an understanding as to how one could possibly understand what it is they are saying in the first place. That is, any claim to understanding presupposes an understanding of what "understanding" is in itself. This has been the very issue that has preoccupied the hermeneutic tradition since Friedrich Schleiermacher first raised it in the eighteenth century. Indeed, we might characterize the development of the hermeneutic tradition precisely as "the search for understanding", and so this issue provides the point of discussion for Chapter III of this work.

What does it mean to understand another person? Does it mean to possess a particular power of empathy; an ability to enter into the life of another as a form of spiritual communion? Does it mean to share with another a particular set of speech habits and a common language such that both partners are able to communicate their respective self-interests to each other? These and other questions are the subject of Chapter IV, but ultimately they lead to what is of fullest significance for the hermeneutic project, which is to discern that which is spoken through speech and to make it speak again as a new voice. This is the genuine poetic interest of all hermeneutic inquiry. "Poetry", says Gadamer, "shows men in conversation",[16] and it finds its truest expression in the "art" of writing, which is a "coming to the aid of thought."[17] Hermeneutic writing demonstrates with greater clarity the dialectical task of understanding by grasping the full ideality of all speech. And, by lifting that ideality from the burden of its specificity in individual utterances, raises speech into a new conversation amongst the living. In short, the art of hermeneutic writing is to give voice to the deep ontology of all human speaking, but by doing so in written form, it restores ontological reflection to its true place within the conversation of mankind. Again, these matters are discussed more fully in Chapter IV, but they find their object in Chapter VI, which asks, "of what does the language of living with children speak?"

In conclusion here, we return to that with which we began, by inquiring into the motivation of this work. What interest undergirds its search? It is a determination that the dominating paradigms within the tradition of child study have lost sight of their true interest, which is children themselves; that despite an inordinate flood of professed concern for children, children are not the real concern. Because by keeping children shrouded and sealed within a predetermined universe of professional discourse, children have lost their living voice in human affairs. The power they actually wield in their day to day intercourse with those adults with whom they share a life, such power is, in fact, masked and glossed over by a public deliberation which finds its prejudice, not in the facticity of living occasions between old and young, but in forms of thinking which render children as objects for inspection and management, rather than as living beings who carry our blood in their blood, and by whose life we in turn gain life. An examination of those forms of thinking in which we can no longer afford to sustain predominant interest is the concern of the next chapter, Chapter II.

In proferring the study as a hermeneutical inquiry into the meaning of children in the lives of adults, attention needs to be drawn to the work's experimental nature. To the writer's knowledge, there is no publication available which shows how the insights of the hermeneutic tradition bear directly on investigation of the life-world. Hence this present work is proposed as one example of how such an investigation might proceed. What is offered in Chapter VI ("Of What Does the Language of Living with Children Speak?") is given, not as a definitive word on the subject, but as an illustration of the possibilities hermeneutic inquiry holds for opening up dimensions of our lives with children; dimensions which have heretofore remained silent beyond the realms of common discourse.

# CHAPTER II

# THE FOUNDATIONS OF CONTEMPORARY KNOWLEDGE ABOUT CHILDREN

## Introduction

In this chapter it will be proposed that the ways in which children are discussed in contemporary child study have emerged, by and large, from a world view rooted in empirical, positivist science.[1] The result has been that, whether membership is claimed in "developmental", "behaviouristic", or even "wholistic" traditions, the interest is one of a search for objective knowledge about the phenomenon of the child, as the child exists either in some sort of grand isolation, or as a 'unique species' in relation to others. What makes the field of child study possibile is (a) a view of the child *as* child; i.e., separate in some way from the public self-deliberations of adult life; and (b) a belief in the possibility of a knowledge about children that somehow does not reflect anything about those for whom it is knowledge. As a consequence of both, the deeper question of the meaning of children for adults is not addressed. As Karl Manheim put it half a century ago, "every ultimate meaningful end has been eliminated from science from the very first .... Today a modern research worker might say with Nietzche, 'I have forgotten why I ever began'."[2]

In North America, G. Stanley Hall is often achknowledged as the "father" of modern child study,[3] particularly with the publication of his paper "The Contents of Children's Minds" in 1883. But both the date and the title locate Hall in the full blush of Enlightenment science. Speaking at the St. Louis World's Fair in 1904, he identified what he regarded as the true enemy of science; namely, "fruitless speculation about matters beyond observation."[4] By extolling the virtues of strictly empirical, objective knowledge, however, Hall deprived himself of the possibility of seeing the limitation of his own participation in it. He did not recognize the epistemology and metaphysic at the heart of his own claims.

## The Origins of Modern Epistemology

Both Alfred North Whitehead in his classic 1925 Lowell lectures on "Science and the Modern World"[5] and Karl Mannheim in his 1936 essay on the social origins of modern epistemology,[6] ground contemporary thinking in the Renaissance revolt against the closed systems of medieval scholasticism. As Whitehead remarked in his opening address:

> Science has never shaken off the impress of its origin in the historical revolt of the later Renaissance. (But) it has remained, however, a predomin-

> antly anti-rationalist movement, based upon a naive faith. What reasoning it has wanted has been borrowed from mathematics which is a surviving relic of Greek rationalism, following the deductive method. Science repudiates philosophy, yet, it has never cared to justify its faith or to explain its meanings.[7]

What sustains the scientific enterprise, according to Whitehead, is the implicit belief in the orderliness of nature, an orderliness transmuted from early Greek and Christian beliefs in an ordered cosmology in which "all things great and small are conceivable as exemplifications of general principles which reign throughout the natural order."[8]

It should be emphasized that Whitehead's lectures were an attempt to rescue science from this particular view, traceable through Aristotle, Galileo, Bacon and eventually Newton. While not denying the sense of the orderliness, of the recurring nature of things, Whitehead argues that "nothing ever really recurs in exact detail":

> No two days are identical, no two winters. What has gone, has gone forever. Accordingly, the practical philosophy of mankind has been to expect the broad recurrences, and accept the details as emanating from the inscrutable womb of things beyond the ken of rationality.[10]

What needs to happen, suggests Whitehead, is for science to recover its philosophical sense, to shun its almost sole reliance on mechanistic reason, and search for its meaning in its own mysteries. As he puts it later in his lecture: "If science is not to degenerate into a medley of *ad hoc* hypotheses, it must become philosophical, and must enter upon a thorough criticism of its own foundations."[10]

Writing in Europe immediately prior to the outbreak of World War II, Karl Mannheim argued that epistemology is a philosophical product of breakdown in unitary world-view. For example, the search of the Greek Sophists for the grounds of knowledge arose out of the collision of two modes of explanation--the mythology of the dominant nobility and the analytical habits of the rising urban artisan classes. The decisive fact of modern times--since the Renaissance--has been the collapse of the intellectual monopoly of the church which in turn brought about a sudden flowering of unprecedented intellectual richness, but also a "profound disquietude"[11] which reaches down to the present day. It is the disquietude of a loss of certainty through a loss of absoluteness.

All epistemological speculation, suggests Mannheim, is oriented within the polarity of subject and object. Either epistemology begins with a world of objects, which, in one way or another, it dogmatically presupposes as familiar to all, and, with this as a basis, explains the position of the subject in relation to them. Or else, epistemology starts with the subject itself as the immediate and unquestioned datum, from which is derived the possibility of valid knowledge. For periods in which the objective world-view remains more or less unshaken, and in epochs which succeed in presenting one unambiguously perceivable world-order, there exists the tendency to base the existence of the knowing human subject and his intellectual capacities on human factors alone. Thus, in the Middle Ages, it was believed that not only did an unambiguous world-order exist, but also the "existential value" to be attributed to every object in the hierarchy of things was known. But after the breakdown of ontological securities, through the undermining of the authority of the church, the conception of order in the world of objects became problematical, and there remained no alternative but to turn to the subject alone as the sole point of epistemological judgment and appreciation.

Although, says Mannheim, precursors for this tendency were already to be found in medieval thought, it fully emerged for the first time in the rationalistic current of French and German philosophy from Descartes through Leibnitz to Kant on the one hand, and in the more psychologically oriented epistemology of Hobbes, Locke, Berkely and Hume on the other. This was above all else the meaning of Descartes' intellectual experiment[12] in which he attempted to question the origin of all traditional epistemology, in order, finally, to arrive at the no longer questionable cogito ergo sum. For Descartes, the thinking subject was the only point from which to undertake a search for the foundations of knowledge about the world.

The implications of this for our subsequent examination of themes in 'child knowledge' cannot be over-estimated. William Barrett argues that Descartes' turn is the single most important event to be grasped for an understanding of the basis of modern knowledge.[13] Several consequences of the Cartesian position deserve outline. First, to place the basis of and authority for knowledge in the subject rather than in the things of the world means to understand oneself as somehow irrevocably separated from them. Not only is the human world separate from the world of nature, but so, in a sense, is one human being from another. Furthermore, there emerges a conception of the world, and its formation, which is subject to a pure intellectual control. The notion of control is at the heart of the new science. As Barret remarks, "Behind the faltering steps of the doubter marches the conquistador."[14] The more explicit influences of such a view on the field of child study per se will be noted later, but it may be suggested here that, epistemologically at least, Descartes' turn represents the point at which it becomes possible to conceive of children as a form of objective species, about which it is possible to derive objective data, but from whom no fully human voice need be heard.

A second influence from Descartes bears on the way the human mind comes to be understood. That is, the same kinds of mechanistic and functional orderliness observed in the world provide the organizing principles whereby human thinking itself is to be comprehended. Thus, for example, and this is Mannheim's insight, "such meaning-giving interpretations with qualitatively rich contents (as, for example, sin, despair, loneliness, love) come to be replaced by formalized entities such as the feeling of anxiety, the perception of inner conflict, the experiencing of isolation, etc."[15] What is used are the interpretive schemas derived from mechanics applied to the inner experience of man. The aim is not so much to comprehend the inner richness of experiences as they co-exist in the individual and together operate toward the achievement of a meaningful goal. Rather, the attempt is to exclude all distinctive elements in experience from the content in order that, wherever possible, the conception of psychic events should approximate the simple schemas of a mechanical world (position, motion, cause, effect, etc.). The consequence is a kind of abstracting-out of the richness of qualitative experience in the name of a truer understanding of the essential structures of the psyche. But the essential vividness, or living potential, of the experience becomes ignored as not being ultimately significant in itself. What is important is the structure or the function that is demonstrated or activated by the experience.

When this method of proceeding epistemologically is carried to extremes we see that it can never address the question of the meaning of experience, except as it exemplifies or reinforces certain already given definitions as to the way reality _is_. No experience in and of itself has any message or meaning apart from the degree to which it reinforces the prior conditions for possible knowledge. So, for example, a parent discovers his four-year-old Billy imitating all his speech and actions, and wonders why. He consults a psychology text about the behaviour of four-year-olds and reads, "almost all four-year-olds imitate their parents" and says to himself, "Oh, I see. Now I know why Billy imitates me; because that's what all four-year-olds do." But what is given as an answer is really no answer at all to the originating "why?"

## Contemporary Knowledge About Children

If we were to search for three names whose ideas have most profoundly affected the nature of contemporary knowledge about children, they would be Jean Jacques Rousseau, John Locke, and Charles Darwin. The first two worked as contemporaries of Descartes and reflect the subjectivist thrust of the new science. Darwin, publishing toward the end of the nineteenth century, might be claimed as responsible for the biologizing of man's reflection about children. As William Kessen has expressed it: "Darwin gave us the child as a legitimate source of scientific information about the nature of man. He also legitimized the baby journal."[16]

At the close of the eighteenth century, Rousseau stood in the tradition of the Romantic writers, notably Blake, Wordsworth and Dickens, who sought to depict the human tragedy wrought from the consequences of the new radical empiricism. This empiricism, as science, had transmuted itself into burgeoning technology and massive industrialization. Rousseau's views of childhood were revolutionary in several respects. Rather than treat the child as a small adult, to be trained out of its childish ways into adult morality and reason, Rousseau argues that

> nature wants children to be children before they are men .... Childhood has ways of seeing, thinking, and feeling peculiar to itself; nothing can be more foolish than to substitute our ways for them.[17]

Rousseau's ideas of child development conflicted with those of the empirical philosophers such as Locke, who argued that there could be nothing innately 'childish' in a young human being. Locke proposed that children were in possession of the same mental mechanisms for interpreting and constructing experience as were adults.[18] In many ways, the views of both Rousseau and Locke, insofar as both of them wrote works explicitly about children, are the direct ancestors of views prevailing today.[19] Rousseau, through Darwin and

Freud, anticipates the emergence of contemporary developmental psychology as well as much of 'progressive' education. Locke's heritage is preserved through Watson, Skinner and the behaviourists who argue that growth to maturity is shaped by the push and pull of environmental factors.

In both these traditions three features are apparent. First, both see the world of the child as somehow distinct from that of the adults, either qualitatively, as in the case of the more mechanistic traditions, where by virtue of the undeveloped nature of the child's cognitive structures or its relative dependence, some sort of separateness from adult life is conceivable. Or separateness is possible through those traditions (e.g., Piaget, Kohlberg) which view children predominantly in terms of being self-actualizers constantly acting on and experimenting with their surrounding world in order to make sense of it for themselves alone. The titles of many contemporary child development texts exemplify the point here. One example is Guy Lafrançois' Of Children.[20] Implicit in such a title is the view that children not only live alone, but can also be understood alone. That is, it is presumed that knowledge "of children" can be displayed without a necessary asking of the question "children of whom?" These children of whom so much is known, to whom do they belong? Where are those whose voice makes possible such formulations about their own children?

A second feature of both these traditions is paradoxical to that above; namely, that the adult is taken as the measure of the child. The process can work negatively or positively. Negatively, Rousseau and Freud seek to eliminate those constraints (social, environmental, etc.) deemed as preventing the real personality of the child from asserting itself. In other words, there is a taken-for-granted adult conception of what is ideally possible in human nature if only the proper conditions could be provided in childhood. Positively, as in Skinner, there is implicit an adult ideal that informs the nature of the end toward which children can be or should be shaped. Similarly, Piaget's fifth and final stage of cognitive development as one of "formal operations" implies a previously accepted definition of adult maturity against which all others can be measured. For all of these instances, the child is designated as such by virtue of a prior, although not explicit, conception of what is not a child; i.e., what is an adult. This issue is what Kessen calls the question of the "end-point";[21] that is, that any theory about the authentic nature of children inevitably implies a pre-determination of what ideally constitutes an adult.

These paradoxical features of the child study field; that is, the isolation of children from adult self-reflection at the same time as a subsumption of children under a foreclosed adult self-determination, are made possible by a third aspect emerging from the roots of the tradition as developed in contemporary discourse. This is that the question of the value of children for adults in everyday life is not addressed.

In other words, to see children as objects for empirical inspection and theorizing does not in itself allow the question of why we are looking at them in that way. Empirical inspection begins, rather, with a concern for the method of investigation as distinct from its motivation. To ask for the grounds of motivation, however, is to inquire into how it is that children are valued and held to be important for inspection in the first place.

The theorizing about children in such novel ways by Rousseau and Locke inevitably spoke of a concern that children should be freed from previous misconceptions concerning children's nature. The questioning of what it means to understand children for Locke and Rousseau was fresh. But when their theorizing is taken as a new absolute wisdom, then the originating creative sensitivity to children which made their theories possible is lost. Furthermore, if others' interpretations of children are taken as statements of the 'true being' of children, then children have lost their power to make a difference in our reflecting about them. We have shut them out from our experience; or, we might say, locked them into our experience in such a way that they have no voice apart from what we grant them.

To argue in this way leads us to the tradition that speaks directly to these concerns. That is the tradition of hermeneutics, which asks as its abiding question, what does it mean to understand something--whether children, adults, texts, actions, culture, etc. Hermeneutics poses the challenge that any investigation of 'what a child is' inevitably throws back to the investigator questions concerning the meaning of understanding, and locates the researcher and what is being researched in an unambiguously dialectical relationship. In understanding the world hermeneutically, the potential exists for adults and children to become engaged in living dialogue. In the next chapter, attention will be given primarily to an exploration of the hermeneutic tradition itself, with an attempt to search for how the language of living with children may be understood. The interest is to search for a way in which that which constitutes the sense of living-ness in relations between adults and children can be made apparent, so that neither 'mature' nor young are left isolated in investigation, but rather shown to be inextricably connected in a living dialogue. Eventually, in Chapters V and VI, focus will be given to the way in which children present themselves in the experience of adults. This is in keeping with the overall intention of the project to push away a purely 'child-centred' understanding of what it means to understand children, and to locate that understanding in an appreciation of what 'understanding' is in itself; namely, a creative dialogue in which one's past, present and future in the world with others, including one's children, are in perpetual conversation. In this way, it may be appropriate to say that there is no such thing as a 'child' in any pure, abstract, species-specific sense of the word. There is only another person, younger, who may or may not share one's flesh and blood, but with whom to live (share a world) means to have one's own experience rendered more fully alive.

# CHAPTER III

# THE SEARCH FOR UNDERSTANDING: THE RISE OF THE HERMENEUTIC TRADITION AND THE QUESTION OF METHOD IN LIFE-WORLD RESEARCH

## Introduction[1]

Simply put, hermeneutics means "interpretation", from the Greek root hermeneuo, interpret. The god Hermes, from whose name the word is derived, is associated with the function of tranmitting what is beyond human understanding into a form that human intelligence can grasp. The various roots of the word (hermeios, hermeneuein, hermeneia, etc.) all suggest the process of bringing a thing or a situation from unintelligibility to understanding. Hermeneutics has to do with making familiar and comprehensible the strange, the alien, the mysterious. As Wilhelm Dilthey, an early forerunner of modern hermeneutics, once put it:

> Interpretation would be impossible if the expressions of life were totally alien. It would be unnecessary if there was nothing alien in them .... Hermeneutics is required whenever there is something alien with which the art of understanding has to come to terms.[2]

To wish to trace the word itself to its origins is, in turn, to become engaged in the very process of which hermeneutics speaks. That is, it is to be grasped by the need to search for the grounds of present life. It is to rise from a certain cognitive somnolence and to ask, "How is it, how has it come about, that I use these words or act in these ways?" And in that asking, two things occur. First arises the question: Who or what gave me these words, these actions? Second, to search for an answer is not only to cease taking them for granted, as if their existence were nothing but a form of ontic spasm, whose meaning has nothing to do with their history. It is also to understand the possibility of living dialogue with people and traditions once thought dead.

And so, to become engaged hermeneutically is to see oneself engaged inextricably in history, as a participant in the "living stream of things", as Edmund Husserl often put it. Yet it is more; for to recover one's historical sense hermeneutically is to raise the question of the meaning of human history, the meaning of human events. The very raising asks: What difference does it make--for today and for tomorrow--to know any past? "Hermes", Heidegger once said, "brings the message of destiny."[3] Hermeneutics, then, has to do with interpreting--making sense of, bringing to intelligibility and understanding--the meaning of human destiny as it reveals itself in the occurrences of daily life. As such too, it asks for the nature of understanding itself, of how it is we can say, "Yes, I understand." In short, hermeneutics is concerned with human ontology, with the be-ing of being human, pre-eminently as that ontology is expressed through human language.

To paint the matter so broadly does not reflect a propensity for generalization so much as a desire to locate the hermeneutical enterprise at the heart of any reflection on human experience in the world. As Gadamer has expressed it:

> Philosophical hermeneutics takes as its task the opening up of the hermeneutical dimension in its full scope, showing its fundamental significance for our entire understanding of the world and thus for all the various forms in which this understanding manifests itself....[4]

And as such, hermeneutics is not just one aspect, or one form of methodological procedure of, say, the human sciences, but is "a universal aspect of philosophy."[5] That is, it seeks to lay open the heart of human understanding in its fullest sense. It is in this sense that hermeneutic inquiry represents the most radical call for a re-orientation of priorities in life-world investigation, and why it is we turn to the hermeneutic tradition as a source for grounding a new form of reflection concerning the place of children in adult experience.

When we trace the development of the tradition of hermeneutics, we can see that it has almost always defined itself as an affirmative reaction against dominant theological, epistemological, and metaphysical presuppositions deemed to foreclose and limit the possibilities of human understanding. Prior to the Renaissance, interpretation scholarship centred on the exegesis of classical and biblical texts, whereby the classical-philosophical method, the ars critica, in emphasizing the correct rules of interpretation, ensured that permanently fixed expressions of life were properly understood.[6] Modern hermeneutics essentially arises out of this early interest in the art of exegesis which attempted to determine and secure both the possibilities and limits of universally valid understanding.

After the Renaissance, interpretation and the prescription of rules for interpretation entered a new phase. They were separated from Classical and Christian antiquity by language, conditions of life and rationality. Henceforth, interpretation became, in contrast to the former practice, a transposition into an alien spiritual life by means of grammatical, factual, and historical studies. The final establishment of hermeneutics from a basis in biblical interpretation came with the publication in 1567 of a work entitled Clavis Scripturae Sacrae[7], by Lutheran reformer and theologian Matthias Flacius.

## Interpretation as Community Event and the Relationship Between Part and Whole: Matthias Illyricus Flacius (1520-1575)

Flacius worked in the context of the debate between Catholic and Reformed theologians' understanding of the place of scripture in formulating absolute doctrinal truth. The most urgent task for a contemporary Lutheran in the sixteenth century was the refutation of the Catholic doctrine of tradition as the high court of appeal in biblical interpretation.

Yet in the Catholic argument against the Protestant principal of scriptural authority (Sola Scriptura), the right of tradition to determine the interpretation of scripture could only be based on the assertion that no adequate and universally acceptable interpretation could be derived from the scriptures themselves.

In the context of these struggles, Flacius undertook the task of demonstrating the possibility of a universally valid interpretation through methods and rules which no earlier hermeneutics had produced. His argument took two forms. On the one hand, no text of scripture can be understood apart from the living contemporary community for whom it is meaningful, even as a problem. That is, any text, even the whole of scripture, is relevant only insofar as the living community is gathered by it to search for its meaning. Thus, what makes any interpretation valid as a possibility is the living contemporary community itself. The validity of any text is situated not in the text per se, but in the experience of communal Christian practice.

On the other hand, almost as a corollary, Flacius was the first to grasp the significance of that psychological or technical principle of exegesis, according to which a single section of any work must be interpreted from the intention and composition of the whole. There is an informing vision not only to the whole of scripture, but also within individual books which alone can give sense to specific texts.

Specific texts cannot be adequately understood without an understanding of that prior vision, which itself arises in a linguistic and historical context.

The consequences of this hermeneutical turn were threefold. In the first place, it liberated exegesis and interpretation from the dogma of tradition. Secondly, it grounded hermeneutics on two factors--philology (comparative study of how language was and is used) and historical circumstance. But thirdly, and perhaps most crucially, it resulted in a peculiarly unhistorical view of human nature. Historical circumstances and linguistic limitations came to be seen as restrictions on a raw human nature; restrictions which required interpretation in order that what is essentially human could be understood.

## The Development of a General Hermeneutics: Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768-1834)

It was Friedrich Schleiermacher in the nineteenth century, however, who saw through to the implications of this view; namely that a truly effective hermeneutics could develop only when historical and philological analyses were combined with genuine philosophical ability. Until Schleiermacher, hermeneutic inquiry had remained essentially a rule-governed discipline, bound by an interest in the construction of universally valid interpretations. Schleiermacher, however, proposed a "general hermeneutics"[8] focussing on the question of what it is that constitutes interpretive understanding, what makes understanding possible. Under Schleiermacher's influence, hermeneutics as interpretation theory acquired a new meaning of being a science or art of understanding or what might be characterized as a phenomenology of understanding.

Schleiermacher worked at a time when two important cultural developments were taking place. On the one hand was the rise of German transcendental philosophy which insisted on "going back beyond what is given in consciousness to a creative potential which, working uniformly and unconscious of itself, produces the entire form of the world in us."[9] At the same time, Hegel[10] and von Ranke[11] represented an influential movement in the emergence of historiography, seeking to systematize historical study in an effort to identify possible purpose and meaning in history. Schleiermacher took up these themes in his general hermeneutics. For to ask what makes understanding possible poses the question of the nature of purposeful action (demonstrated exemplarily in literary texts) and its creative historicality.

Given previous hermeneutical frameworks, an interpreter could analyse understanding as reproduction or reconstruction. But in order to do that in a manner faithful to the creative, purposeful intention of the original writer Schleiermacher recognized the need to see himself as interpreter, as, in a sense, captured by and participating in the same creative and purposeful spirit which made the original human action (in this case, writing) possible. He suggested that there exists a homogeneous and creatively effective potential which, unconscious of its own effect and formation, takes up and develops the initial impetus behind a work or action. Artistic inspiration and production, for example, involves an attitude of receptivity to this creative spirit (Geist) which finds its fulfillment not only in its productions but also in the complementarity of those productions as being received and understood by others. In other words, there is something about human production which demands to be understood. Words, paintings, actions, etc. are produced for others, not simply for their intrinsic merit. To understand a work means to be guided and captured by, and receptive to, that which makes the original work possible. Understanding and interpretation are always, in this sense, active in life itself.

When Schleiermacher came to translate the dialogues of Plato, he brought to bear this new hermeneutical orientation.[12] Plato, he argues, must be understood as a philosophical artist, and the aim of interpretation must be to establish the unity between the character of Plato's philosophizing and the artistic form of his works. But philosophy is still living, intimately bound up with conversation; its written representation being but a fixation for the aid of memory. Thus, interpretation itself must take the form of a dialogue, and, what is more, it must be of such an artistic form that it makes necessary a personal reconstruction of the living train of thought. At the same time, however, according to the strict unity of Platonic thought, each dialogue must continue what had gone earlier, prepare what will come later, and continue to spin the threads of the various parts of the philosophy. If one pursues these relationships between the dialogues, argued Schleiermacher, there arises a connection between the major works which supplies the key to Plato's basic intention. Only when this artistically formed connection has been grasped does the comprehension of Plato come about.

In this process of understanding, the individuality of the text interpreter and that of a text's author do not face each other as two irreconcilable entities. Both have been formed on the basis of a common human nature, and this makes possible the common ground which all men share and which is necessary for speech and comprehension. When the interpreter projects his own vitality, as it were, into a historical milieu, he is able, by stressing certain mental processes and restraining others, to bring about a reconstruction of an alien life within himself. But a fundamental difficulty arises here. For the whole of a work must be understood from the individual words and their combinations, and yet the full comprehension of the details presupposes the understanding of the whole. So the interpreter, in his understanding, is 'caught', so to speak, in an endless circle wherein his understanding, by definition, is never complete.[13]

## Hermeneutics as a Human Science: Wilhelm Dilthey (1833-1911)

When we come to Dilthey, we find the hermeneutic tradition becoming established within the social/human sciences in a form more clearly recognizable in contemporary social science scholarship.[14] There are several reasons for this. One is that Dilthey pioneered the evolution of the field beyond a strict concern with literary textual interpretation, for he saw the powerful relationship between language and life. That is, a consideration of the questions concerning the understanding and interpretation of textual materials inevitably drew one into broader questions about how it is that people in different contexts come to understand each other at all. Secondly, writing as he was in the late nineteenth century when the positivist sciences were in ascendency, Dilthey became deeply aware of the limitations and dangers of applying objectivist natural science methods for studying human affairs. As he put it:

> If the mind places itself over against its own creations as something merely objectively empirical, and analyses them according to the external natural scientific method, then there

> occurs a self-alienation of mind in regard to its own creations.[15]

It was this concern over the potentially alienating quality of the objectivist methods of natural science for the study of human life that inspired Dilthey's distinction between the interests of the natural sciences (*Naturwissenschaften*) and those of what he termed the specifically human sciences (*Geisteswissenschaften*).

Dilthey perceived the crisis of his time to be engendered by a fundamental discordance between thought and life. On the one hand, intellectuals and philosophers continued, in the main, to aspire to the closed theoretical systems of eternal ideas and principles, following Kant and Hegel, while on the other hand, people of practical affairs and researchers in the newer sciences expressed their contempt for theory or any larger philosophical perspective for their accomplishments. As Richard Palmer suggests, it is possible to sense in Dilthey some of the fundamental conflicts in nineteenth century thinking: the romantic desire for immediacy and totality even while seeking data that would be "objectively valid."[16] In Dilthey's words, it was a concern that "thought had become life-less, and life thoughtless."[17] In response, he took as his own personal charge "to understand life, as it is lived by man."[18]

The basis of that understanding was to be the study of lived-experience itself (*Erlebnis*). This was not to be understood simply as a study of, say, perception, or sensation, but of experience in all its depth and diversity, including the grounds of theorizing about experience itself. In doing this, Dilthey attempted to steer a clear path, a spiral dialectical path, one might say, through the two contemporary intellectual streams of "other-worldly idealism and unthinking empirical realism."[19] Dilthey proffered a form of immanent idealism which gave full import to the totality of human life, human thinking, as well as human acting. To achieve this, he argued for the necessity of connecting the empirical study of human situations with the study of human history. The former acknowledged the concreteness of human experience, while the latter could bring to awareness the archeology of human consciousness.

In his earlier years[20] Dilthey studied theology in the Reformed tradition and, in fact, was destined for an ecclesiastical position. At the University of Heidelberg (1852-53) and then Berlin (1854-67) he immersed himself in the study of philology, textual exegesis and the new theological criticism. Also at Berlin he absorbed the methods of the German historical school under the tutelage of Karl Ritter, Theodore Mommsen and Leopold von Ranke. This school had emancipated history from the trammels of theology and moral philosophy, and opened the way not merely to the factual richness of the past but to a whole new manner of looking at history as essentially the history of consciousness.

But still Dilthey became convinced that neither philosophy nor history, as generally practiced, offered the resources and methods for genuine comprehension of the world. For as he saw it, neither the philosophical nor historiographical understanding of the day were of assistance in elucidating the relationship between knowledge and action, that is, in producing the kind of knowledge which leads to action in the present, and the formation of personal or social life-values. For Dilthey, a more genuinely human science could be neither simply psychological, such as in the empirical, objectivist sciences of the mind or of consciousness (as he saw reflected in Husserl, for example) nor could it be a historicism which saw contemporary human efforts solely as the product of historical antecedents. Somehow, it was necessary to articulate a science which embraced both human historicity as well as human creativity. For Dilthey this was the art of self-reflection, which he understood as neither purely subjective nor objective but fundamentally intersubjective. We can sum up Dilthey's hermeneutic project for a genuinely human science with a sentence he used himself:

> A science belongs to the human studies only if its object becomes accessible to us through a procedure based on the systematic relation between life, expression, and understanding.[21]

The terms "experience", "expression" and "understanding" are central to Dilthey's overall work and deserve brief exposition here.

There are two words in German for "experience"--Erfahrung and Erlebnis. The former refers to experience in general, as when one refers to his "experience in life." Dilthey uses the term Erlebnis (derived from the verb erleben--to experience, especially in individual cases) and for him it is defined as lived experiences held together by a common meaning. An experience of romantic love, for example, is not based on one encounter alone but brings together events of various kinds, times, and places; but their unity of meaning as "an experience" lifts them out of the stream of life and holds them together in a unit of meaning. But such lived-experience (Erlebnis) is not to be construed simply as the "content" of a reflexive act of consciousness, for then it would be a some-thing of which we are reflectively conscious. Rather it is something we live in and through; it is the lived reality as such, as it is pre-flexively given in experience. Lived-experience can subsequently become an object of reflection, but then it is no longer immediate experience but the object of another act of encounter. Thus, experience itself is more an act of consciousness, rather than something which consciousness stands out against and apprehends. It exists prior to any subject-object dichotomy, and represents that direct contact with life which may be called "immediate lived experience."[22] In this important sense, then, the world and our experience of it are given to us in an undivided reality. In saying this Dilthey was defining his interests over and against the poverty of the positivist subject-object model of human encounter with the world and the shallow separation of feelings from objects, and sensations from the total act of understanding. "How absurd", he once said, "to separate one's sensations and feelings from the total context of relationships held together in the unity of experience."[23]

Furthermore, there is a profound temporality in the context of the relationships given in experience. Experience is not a static matter; on the contrary, in its unity of meaning it reaches out and encompasses both recollection of the past and anticipation of the future in the total context of meaning. Meaning cannot be imagined except in terms of what the future is expected to be, nor can it free itself from dependence upon the materials which the past supplies. The past and the future, then, form a structural unity with the presentness of all experience, and this temporal context is the inescapable horizon within which any perception in the present is interpreted.

It is this insistence on the temporality of experience and understanding that later makes Dilthey important for Gadamer's[24] and Habermas's[25] notion of the centrality of historical consciousness for human emancipation. For in Dilthey, historicality does not mean being focussed on the past, or some kind of tradition-mindedness that enslaves one to dead ideas. Historicality (Geschichtlichkeit) is rather the affirmation of the temporality of human experience. It means we understand the present really only in the horizon of past and future. And this is not a matter of conscious effort but is built into the very structure of experience itself. This view places the hermeneutical understanding of experience in direct opposition to any view of knowledge that would be satisfied with analyses and categories frozen for all time.[26]

The English term "expression" is usually used to translate the German Ausdruck, and should be clearly distinguished from connotations such as feelings and sentiments. For Dilthey, an expression is not primarily an embodiment of one person's feelings but an expression of life itself, and as such can refer to an idea, a law, a social form, or especially language--in short, anything that reflects man's objectivated inner experience of the world. The hermeneutical signifiicance of objectivation is that because of it, understanding can be focussed on a fixed, "objective" expression of lived experience instead of struggling to capture it through introspection. Another term for Ausdruck might well be 'works'--whether artistic creations, texts, or actions, "for, above all," said Dilthey, "the grasping of the structure of the inner life is based on the interpretation of works, works in which the texture of inner life comes fully to expression."[27] Expression in this case is not of a purely individual and personal reality, for then it could not be understood by another person. When the expression is in writing it uses language, a medium held in common with the interpreter. Hence, it is pre-eminently through language as a socio-historical objectivation, that a science of man becomes possible.

For Dilthey, language enables man not only to transmit experience but also to store it, so that this body of knowledge becomes a socio-cultural heritage, a kind of heredity of experience which appears 'a priori' because it is immemorial to the individual mind. Language is a medium which expresses the contents of experience in what must be considered a general (or at least common) form in reference to a common world. It is not my experience or your experience but our experience which is expressed. As Dilthey put it:

> Every word, every sentence, every gesture or politeness, every work of art, and every historical action are only comprehensible because a community binds the expresser with the interpreter; every person lives, thinks, and acts constantly in a sphere of community and only in such a sphere does he understand.[28]

Language, then, is the medium of expression, or the human expression which links the individual to a common world of meaning.

Understanding, or Verstehen, is both an ordinary or "natural" (i.e., unreflexive) form of human awareness and a method of inquiry in the human sciences.[29] These two senses of understanding--the more commonplace and the more technical--can be distinguished but not entirely divorced. Dilthey's theory of Verstehen shows the continuity and reciprocal influence of the life-world (Lebenswelt) and knowledge about it (Wissenschaft), but Dilthey's notion of human understanding is not fully resolvable into logical, methodological, psychological, epistemological, or ontological prescriptions. It may be approached from all these vantage points but cannot be assigned exclusively to any one of them.

In reaction to contemporary neo-Kantians, Dilthey repeatedly stressed that the human sciences do not simply deal with a special object, that is, human life as distinct from nature, but rather they employ a special method or "attitude" toward that object. Method and object, however, condition each other reciprocally and can be separated in analysis only with the proviso that they operate in synthesis. Understanding is not an act without a content, nor a result without a process of arriving there. Verstehen is a 'natural' or practical attitude in life which, by means of critical controls and refinements becomes the method of the human sciences. Dilthey often expressed the difference between the human and natural sciences by drawing a sharp distinction between understanding (Verstehen) and explanation (Erklären): "We explain nature; man we must understand."[30] Referring more specifically to the mental attitudes pertinent to each body of the sciences, Dilthey described Verstehen as a form of knowledge of the inner mental life of man, whereas Erklären is knowledge of the laws of the casual order of natural phenomena. Understanding is an ongoing approximative process--it has no absolute beginning or final end: "We understand life only in a constant process of approaching ... ; all understanding remains always relative and can never be fully completed."[31] If understanding is necessarily relative, however, it is not simply a medley of perceptions or perspectives, for it shows a progressive refinement toward general validity.

In saying this, several aspects of Dilthey's *Verstehende* method should be clarified. Particularly important is the way in which understanding proceeds from what might be termed natural or naive understanding through the "hermeneutic circle" (a term Dilthey borrowed from Schleiermacher) to structural representation (*Repräsentation*) or constitution (*Aufbau*). The ordinary attitude of elementary *Verstehen* is implicit in the standpoint of everyday life; we orient ourselves to others and to situations by means of a largely tacit process of interpretation. The notion of *Verstehen* is difficult to bring to light not because it is so mysterious, but because it is so commonplace and familiar. In other words, there is a sense in which we can understand without a theory of understanding. Most objects of the human sciences are understood before they are known. Following von Humboldt, Dilthey defined understanding as the "knowledge of that which is already known."[32] Such knowledge depends upon a certain fore-knowledge, a certain prior cognizance which makes re-cognition possible. *Verstehen* is thus a complex of experiential and cognitive content which paradoxically is both possessed from the start and augmented in the process of understanding itself. The object is understood in a tacit sense before it is known in the fullest sense.

These insights brought Dilthey to insist on the inevitably circular character of Verstehen, a quality he regarded as positively productive rather than illogical or tautological. Following Schleiermacher, he saw the pattern of knowledge formation thus: generalizations can be formed only by abstracting from the data those traits and relations which belong together. But this procedure presupposes a prior notion or criterion of what we are looking for. Selection, abstraction, conceptualization, comparison and classification all demand an initial criterion of judgment. Thus it is impossible to be purely inductive or descriptive in method, for thought always demands such a prior determination. What is more, the purpose of interpretive understanding is not an exact description of, or reconstruction of a situation, but rather a structural representation (Repräsentation) or constitution (Aufbau). The intelligible pattern to be understood is not the original temporal order as lived, for the interpreter does not grasp every experiential detail, but rather a set of relations formed into an "ideal order."[33] The grasping of this order begins with re-experiencing, but proceeds through different levels of conceptual representation. The greater the scope of our understanding, the more it is emancipated from the original sequence of events, and the less it resembles a replication of what went on in another mind.

In summing up Dilthey's exploration of the nature of heremeneutic inquiry, then, we can make the following observations. In reaction to idealist nineteenth century natural science, Dilthey determined to establish a human science which would rescue the complete and vivid quality of human experience. A concern for the wholeness of lived experience inevitably brought an attentiveness to the temporality of experience, and the ultimate expressiveness of experience in language. For Dilthey, human science was to be concerned with understanding human experience rather than explaining it. Essential to that understanding is an appropriate attitude which begins with fore-knowledge, but leads through re-experiencing to a form of understanding, never complete, which goes beyond mere replication.

## Hermeneutics as Phenomenology of Being: Martin Heidegger (1889-1976)

In Heidegger, we arrive at a point at which the hermeneutic tradition becomes linked explicitly with phenomenology. Heidegger was a student of Edmund Husserl (1859-1938), Dilthey's contemporary. Arguing against his teacher, Heidegger proposed that knowing and understanding are not fundamentally epistemological questions, but rather ontological ones.

Husserl, in recapitulating Descartes' radical doubt as the starting point of all knowing,[34] had not taken seriously enough the third word of the famous "cogito ergo sum." So suggested Heidegger. As Hermann Tennessen puts it, "Heidegger may be said to ask: cogito ergo--what? What or rather how is this sum?"[35] For Heidegger, knowing and understanding are only part of a larger question; the question of being (Dasein). What does it mean to be?[36]

In Schleiermacher's general hermeneutic, the search was for the possible conditions pertaining to understanding. Dilthey had attempted to establish the grounds of the hermeneutic sciences as being distinct from those of the natural sciences. Heidegger took a quantum leap and defined the essence of the hermeneutic enterprise to be the ontological power of understanding itself which renders possible the disclosure of the very being of things, and ultimately, of Being itself. For Schleiermacher, understanding was grounded in his philosophical affirmation of the identity of inner realities, so that in understanding one vibrated, so to speak, in unison with the speaker as one understood. Understanding involved both comparative, and what Schleiermacher often referred to as "divinatory" phases. Dilthey referred to understanding as that deeper level of comprehension involved in grasping the expressions of human life (particularly language) as more than mere data; as life expressions.

Heidegger did not negate these formulations so much as put them in the context of Being. For him, understanding is the power to grasp one's own possibilities for being, within the context of the world in which one always already exists. Understanding is not a special capacity or gift for feeling into the situation of another person, nor is it merely the power to grasp the meaning of life's expression on a deeper level. For Heidegger, understanding is not an entity in the world but rather the structure of being which makes possible the actual exercise of empirical understanding at all. Understanding is the basis for all interpretation. It is ontologically prior to every act of existing.[37]

In his later writings,[38] Heidegger reviewed how the Western world came to define thinking, being, and truth in essentially presentational terms. By presentational he meant that the very way in which Westerners understand themselves reflects a view whereby thoughts, actions and truths are merely ingredients in experience to be manipulated and controlled at will. In the essay "Plato's Doctrine of Truth",[39] Heidegger attempted to show the understanding of truth as 'unconcealment' (Greek, alethea), as that which reveals itself as true. Contrary to this, he argued, it has been the 'correspondence' theory of truth which has prevailed whereby truth is understood as that which accrues when the perception of the things of the world is seen as correspondent with the way things 'actually are' in the world.

As a consequence, in the West truth has become understood as correct seeing, and thinking a matter of placing an idea before the mind's eye. That is, truth is construed as the proper manipulation of ideas.

In the section of *Being and Time* entitled "The Phenomenological Method of Investigation" Heidegger explicitly refers to his own project as a "hermeneutic."[40] Before trying to understand how he himself conceived this, it is necessary to explore his redefinition of phenomenology. He goes back to the Greek roots of the word: *phainomenon* or *phainesthai*, and *logos*. The word *phainesthai* connotes "that which knows itself, the manifested, revealed". The *pha* is akin to the Greek *phos*, meaning light or brightness, "that in which something can become manifest, can become visible". Phenomena, then, are the "totality of what lies in the light of day, or can be brought to the light; what the Greek identified simply as 'what is'."[41]

*Logos*, says Heidegger, is that which is conveyed in speaking. The deeper sense of *logos* is to let something appear. It is not to be defined as some-thing like 'reason' or 'ground' but rather suggests the speaking function, which makes both reason and ground possible. It has what might be termed an apophantic function; i.e., it points to phenomena. It has an "as" function, since it lets something be seen *as* something.

This function is not merely free but a matter of disclosing, or bringing to manifestness what a thing is; it brings something out of concealment into the light of day. The mind does not project a meaning onto the phenomenon; rather what appears is an ontological manifesting of the thing itself. Of course, through dogmatism--epistemological or otherwise--a thing can be forced to be seen only in its desired aspect. To let a thing appear as 'what it is' becomes a matter of learning to allow it to do so, for it gives itself to be seen. *Logos* (speaking) is not really a power given to language by its user but a power which language gives to the speaker, a means of being seized by what is made manifest through it.

The combination of *phainesthai* and *logos*, then, as "*phenomenology*" means letting things become manifest as what they are, without forcing our categories on them. It means a reversal of direction from traditional presentational modes of thinking. For Heidegger it is not we who point to things; rather, things show themselves to us. This is not to suggest some primitive animism but the recognition that the very essence of understanding is a being led by the power of the thing to manifest itself. This conception resonates obviously with Husserl's call *zu den Sachen selbst* ("to the things themselves").[42] Phenomenology is a means of being led to the phenomenon through a way of access genuinely belonging to it. The implication for hermeneutic theory, then, is that interpretation is not grounded in human consciousness and human categories, but in the manifestness of the thing encountered, the reality that comes to meet us. Understanding is not fixed but historically formed, accumulated in the very experience of encountering phenomena. Being itself, then, can be interrogated by an analysis of how appearing occurs. It is in this sense that ontology must become phenomenology. Ontology must turn to the processes of understanding and interpretation through which things appear; it must lay open what Heidegger calls the "mood and direction" of human existence.[43] Ontology becomes, as such, a phenomenology of being, a hermeneutic of existence. This is neither like a philological methodology, or even a general methodology for the human sciences as envisioned by Dilthey. Rather a hermeneutic phenomenology, as ontology, attempts to lay open what was hidden. The primary act of interpretaiton is to bring something from concealment into clarity.

Two themes central in Heidegger's writing emerge from this; namely: (a) the meaning of world and our relationship to objects in the world,[44] and (b) the meaning or nature of language and speaking.[45] The term "world" for Heidegger does not mean, say, natural environment or habitat in any objective sense. Neither is it the whole of everything in the world typically understood. Rather it means the whole in which the human being always finds itself already immersed. Heidegger was determined never to conceive of 'world' as separate from the self, because for him world was always prior to any separation of self and world objectively considered. Similarly, the world is always prior to all human subjectivity. Neither can the world be described by trying to enumerate all the entities within it, for in such a process, world would, in a fundamental way, be passed over. Heidegger's world is just what is pre-supposed in every act of knowing anything in it. In a basic sense, every entity in the world is always already there. The entities which make up the humanly experienced physical world are not themselves world but _in_ a world. 'World' is so encompassing, and at the same time so intimately present, that it eludes notice. One sees right through it, yet without it one could not see anything at all.

From the point of view of hermeneutic inquiry and the search for understanding, such a conception poses a basic question. How can we become aware of the world if we ourselves are _in_ it so intimately as to be unable to see it as _it_? Knowing the world, replies Heidegger, becomes possible only when some break-down occurs whereby what was previously taken for granted becomes transparent. At the point of break-down, what was once seemingly insignificant bursts forth out of the concealment of its taken-for-grantedness. For the meaning of the things of the world lies in their relation to a structural whole of interrelated meanings and intentions. In break-down, for a brief moment the meaning of objects is 'lighted up', so to speak, emerging directly from the world itself. Heidegger's classical example is of a broken hammer.[46] An unbroken hammer can be analytically and objectively compared to other hammers, but a broken hammer reveals immediately what a hammer is. The essential being of something, then, is not disclosed to the contemplative analytical gaze, but only in the moment in which it suddenly emerges from hiddenness in the full context of world. Similarly, the essential hermeneutical character of understanding is grasped not through an analytical catalogue of its attributes, nor even as it functions day to day, but rather when it breaks down, when it reaches an impasse.[47]

In human experience the bringing of the being of human being from hiddenness to unconcealment is achieved or realized primarily through language and speaking. In An Introduction to Metaphysics[48] Heidegger referred back to a fragment from Parmenides which asserted that being is the same as that for which apprehending occurs. For Heidegger, this meant that "there is being only when there is appearing, entering into unconcealment when unconcealment occurs, when there is disclosure."[49] Just as there can be no 'occurrence' of being without an apprehending of it, and no apprehending without being, so also can there be no being without language, and no language without being:

> If our essence did not include the power of language, all beings would be closed to us, that which we ourselves are, no less than the being that we are not.[50]

Words and language "are not wrappings in which things are packed for the commerce of those who write and speak. It is in words and language that things first come into being and are."[51] It is in this sense that "to be a man is to speak."[52] Human beings realize themselves through their language, for in their spoken words, in their speaking, is the being of human be-ing brought from hiddenness. It is not human beings who use language for their own purposes, but language that speaks the being of humanity through voice and tongue. The essence of language is in speaking, for to say is to show. To speaking and saying also belongs a capacity to listen, so that what is to be said can show itself. In a fundamental sense, saying preserves what is heard.

Heidegger's shift toward an emphasis on the linguisticality of the human way of being, and his assertion that Being leads man and 'calls' him, such that really it is not man but Being that shows itself, are of central importance for a theory of understanding. It makes the very essence of language its hermeneutical function of bringing a thing to show itself. Interpretation becomes a helping of language itself to happen, for in terms of texts, for example, the hermeneutical function of the text itself is emphasized as the place where Being shows itself. Hermeneutics, for Heidegger, deals with the moment that meaning comes to light.

As Richard Palmer makes clear,[53] Heidegger coins the term "meaningfulness" (Bedeutsamkeit) to name the ontological ground for the intelligibility of that fabric of relationships within which understanding can be made manifest. As such, meaningfulness is something deeper than the logical system of language--it is founded on something prior to language and embedded in the world; i.e., the relational whole. However much words may shape or formulate meaning, they point beyond their own system to a meaningfulness already resident in the relational whole of world. As Palmer suggests, meaningfulness is what an object gives to human beings through supplying the ontological possibilities of words and language.[54] Whatever is encountered in the world always arises as already seen in a particular relationship. As Heidegger puts it in the context of language, "Language already conceals within itself a developed mode of ideation, an already shaped way of seeing."[55] In understanding, things in the world are seen as this or as that. The aim of interpretation is to render explicit the likeness of things in their unconcealment.

To elaborate on this would lead to discussion of Heidegger's notion of fore-structure in understanding and the impossibility of presuppositionless interpretation. These concerns are of particular interest to Heidegger's pupil and successor, Hans-Georg Gadamer, whose contribution we will discuss next. In the meantime, the following summary points can be made. Heidegger radicalized the hermeneutic project by casting it as an ontological concern rather than a epistemological one. Hermeneutics became, through Heidegger, a phenomenology of Being, whereby the art is to allow that which makes all things possible to show itself as itself. Hermeneutic inquiry came to be understood not so much as a technical inquiring into the specific qualitites of things or people, as an attentiveness to the speaking of the world through the things of the world as they already are. Understanding is the hermeneutic requirement of letting things be seen, a bringing to unhiddenness that which is concealed, or rather a being met by that which comes to meet us as world. Interpretation is a laying open of the "mood and direction" of human existence, of human be-ing as it discloses itself pre-eminently in language.

## The Relationship Between Truth and Method in Hermeneutic Inquiry: Hans-Georg Gadamer (1900- )

The publication of Gadamer's Wahrheit und Methode[56] (Truth and Method) marks a key point in the direction of hermeneutic inquiry. As a student of Heidegger, Gadamer sought to perceive and develop the positive hermeneutical consequences of phenomenology, and particularly Heidegger's thinking about it. In general we might say that in Gadamer, Heidegger's radical reconceptualization of understanding is brought to systematic expression. The older conception of hermeneutics as the methodological basis specifically for the Geisteswissenschaften is superseded. Indeed the very status of 'method' itself is brought into question. The title Truth and Method points to one of Gadamer's central interests as being to show the relationship between the two words contained in it. For him, method is not the way to truth. On the contrary, truth eludes the methodical person. Understanding is not merely a subjective human process, but the way of being of being human. Hermeneutics is not just a general helping discipline for the humanities, but a philosophical effort to account for understanding as an ontological--the ontological--process in being human. In Gadamer, the basic Heideggerian conceptions of thinking, language, and history are carried over and developed.

Like Heidegger, Gadamer is a critic of the modern surrender to technological thinking, which is rooted, he argues, in subjectism (Subjektität). In this Cartesian tradition, human subjective consciousness and the certainties of reason based on it, are taken as the ultimate point of reference for human knowledge. Like Heidegger, Gadamer searches for the grounds of knowledge in early Greek thinking, which regarded thinking as a part of being itself. The Greeks did not take subjectivity as a starting point, then ground the objectivity of their knowledge on it. Rather knowledge itself was understood as being essentially dialectical, in which the nature of what was being understood itself guides the way it is to be understood. Knowledge is not a possession, but something in which one participates. It is in this sense that Gadamer argues that method itself is incapable of revealing new truth. For method can only render the kind of truth already implicit in the method. Method itself is not arrived at through method, but dialectically; that is, through a questioning responsiveness to the matter being encountered. In method, the inquiring subject leads and controls and manipulates; in dialectic, the matter encountered poses the question to which the participant responds. In a sense, in the interpretive situation, it is the questioner who suddenly finds himself the one who is interrogated or put into question by the 'subject matter.'

Over against a view of purely conceptual, verifiable, technical knowing, Gadamer poses his historical and dialectical concept of "experience", where knowing is not simply a stream of perceptions, but a happening, an event, an encounter. Here, Gadamer shows his debt to Hegel who argued that experience is always a product of the encounter of consciousness with an object; that is, it emanates from the point at which it becomes aware of the limits of its knowing. According to Hegel, experience always has the structure of a reversal or a restructuring of awareness.[57]

At the base of experience is an element of negativity, an experience of "not-ness." That is, when we are aware that something is not as we assumed, then we become open to experiencing it as it is. As Gadamer puts it: "Only through negative instances do we acquire new experiences [for] every experience worthy of the name runs counter to our expectation."[58] Thus for Gadamer, experience is fundamentally "the experience of human finitude."[59] It is only this awareness of one's limitations that can free one from those dogmatic assertions which close in on experience and suffocate its possibilities. The experienced man is one, who recognizing his limitations, is now open to the showing of life itself. This experience is, in the same way, an "experience of one's own historicality";[60] that is, it is in acting in concrete historical situations that human beings become aware of their "limitations, of (their) limitedness in both time and the future."[61] This maturity in experience which places one in proper openness to the future and to the past, is itself the essence of what Gadamer has in mind as historically operative consciousness or, as it is usually translated, "effective-historical consciousness."[62]

To be aware of the historicity of one's consciousness means to come to understand one's relations and experiences in the present as a participating in a living stream. As a result, understanding always takes the form of a dialogue. Hermeneutic understanding starts from an analagous phenomenon, the I-thou (Ich-Du) relationship (not to be confused with Martin Buber's paradigm).[63] The starting point is significant, for it indicates once more that the notion of understanding is not to be reduced to the epistemological relation between a subject and an object. Neither, as David Hoy says, is hermeneutical understanding "a mysterious communion of souls, but rather a participation in a shared meaning."[64]

In Truth and Method Gadamer articulates three modes of possible relations between persons,[65] the first two of which show the nature of distortion in understanding which can occur when the 'other' is seen as object. In the first form, a person is classified according to type-ideas about other people. The other person is subsumed under common psychological generalizations, truisms about human behaviour, and types of personalities in much the same way that past events or literary works can be treated as not unique but as merely representative of more general and typical features of human behaviour. This first mode is completely forgetful of the role of the classifier in the act of classification. The classifier stands aloof from what is being analysed, taking the objectivity of his classification for granted. There exists an unbridgeable distance between knower and known and hence no true understanding between them.

A second mode of experience of the 'thou' and of understanding it, is that wherein the thou (Other) is acknowledged as a person, yet the knowledge of him as Person is still self-related. That is, I still understand the other as one who stands over against me in some self-interested way. The relationship between us is not "immediate" but reflective. It remains possible for each of the partners reflectively to outdo the other. "One claims to express the other's claim and even to understand the other better than the other understands himself.[66] In a sense, one might describe the relationship as one of a mutual struggle for recognition.

The experience of the 'Thou' gained in this way is more adequate than in the first mode where human relations are thought of in terms of "knowledge of human nature" whose interest is simply to calculate how other persons will behave. Yet at the same time it shuts out the essentially dialectic reciprocity at the heart of human understanding itself. It does not recognize the essentially suffocating quality of its own relations even though it may be thought of as self-interested. Gadamer claims that both social work and education operate in this manner. Social work penetrates all relationships between persons as a reflective form of the effort to dominate. The claim to understand the other person in advance performs the function of keeping the claim of the other person at a distance. The typical educative relationship, says Gadamer, is an "authoritative form of welfare work."[67]

Translated hermeneutically, Gadamer calls this form of understanding "historical consciousness." Historical consciousness knows about the otherness of the other, about the past in its otherness, just as well as the understanding of the 'Thou' knows the 'Thou' as a person. It seeks in the otherness of the past, not the example of a general law but something historically unique. By claiming to transcend its own conditionedness completely in its knowing of the other, it is involved in a false dialectical appearance, since it is actually seeking to master, as it were, the past.

This is a fundamental illusion, argues Gadamer. A person who imagines that he is free of prejudices, basing his knowledge on the objectivity of his procedures and denying that he is himself influenced by historical circumstances experiences the power of the prejudices that unconsciously dominate him. "A person who does not accept that he is dominated by prejudices will fail to see what is shown by their light."[68] A person who reflects himself out of the mutuality of the I-Thou relation changes the relationship profoundly and destroys its moral bond. A person who reflects himself out of a living relationship to tradition destroys the true meaning of this tradition in exactly the same way. That is why, says Gadamer, historical consciousness must take account of its own historicality, for, as he puts it, "to stand within a tradition does not limit the freedom of knowledge but makes it possible."[69]

It is this knowledge and recognition that constitutes a third and highest type of hermeneutical experience: the openness of tradition possessed by what Gadamer terms "effective-historical consciousness."[70] It too has a real correspondence with the experience of the 'Thou'. In human relations, the important thing is to experience the 'Thou' truly as a 'Thou'; i.e., not to overlook his claim, but to listen to what he has to say to us. To this end, openness is necessary. But this openness exists not only for the person to whom one listens, but rather anyone who listens is fundamentally open. Without this kind of openness to one another, there is no genuine human relationship. When two people claim to understand each other, this does not mean they each do blindly what the other desires. Rather, openness to the other includes the acknowledgement that I must accept some things that are against myself, even though there is no one else who asks this of me.

This, says Gadamer, is the parallel to the hermeneutical experience. I must allow the validity of the claim made by tradition, not in the sense of simply acknowledging the past in its otherness, but in such a way that it has something to say to me. This is why Gadamer insists that an authentic hermeneutics is grounded in "effective" historical consciousness, rather than simply historical consciousness itself. For to understand history as "effective" means to see oneself not only influenced by it, but participating in it, shaping it, and, in a sense, offering it to the future. As he says repeatedly, following Heidegger, it is impossible for a man to be "out of" history. There is no non-historical objective point from which to view or interpret the events of men, past, present, or future. To say this is to shake loose the connection between truth and method:

> The hermeneutical consciousness has its fulfillment, not in its methodological sureness of itself, but in the same readiness for experience that distinguishes the experienced man by comparison with the man captivated by dogma.[71]

In summary, we might say that for Gadamer, understanding is always an historical, dialectical, linguistic event. There can be no foreordained method for genuine understanding because such understanding can only be gained through a way of access which genuinely belongs to that for which understanding is sought. The experience of negativity, of "notness", is often the point from which new understanding breaks forth. The highest understanding between people is achieved when the other is not regarded as a 'type', nor as one for whom one can claim superior understanding (as social workers may claim of clients, teachers of students, or parents of children) but when one sustains relationships dialogically, in open conversation, acknowledging the other's equally valid claim and participation in what transpires in the space between each member.

## Summary Statement on the Hermeneutic Tradition

When we survey the rise of the hermeneutic tradition we see certain themes emerging which, in all of the pre-eminent thinkers discussed here, express similar concerns. In general, we might say that the central issue is the manner in which meaning, language and history are inter-related. In the early years, the questions surrounded the way in which the exegesis of scripture could be carried out in such a way that the original meaning could be preserved and shown for the purposes of authenticating contemporary doctrinal formulations about the way 'life actually is.' It was Schleiermacher who urged that no part of scripture could be understood separate from the originating vision that informed the whole. Also he saw the necessity for the interpreter to understand himself as participating in the same 'creative spirit' (in the Hegelian sense) as the original authors, and that true interpretation of ancient texts is only possible by virtue of the fact that interpreter and author share a common humanity. Interpretation, therefore, takes fundamentally the form of a dialogue. Schleiermacher, following Flacius, understood the essentially dialogical nature of authentic interpretation.

Dilthey's interest in hermeneutics arose out of a perceived crisis in culture; namely, that in terms of human knowledge and understanding, life and thought were drifting apart through the separation of 'hard' scientific knowledge (_Naturwissenschaft_) from its fundamental human rooting. He once described his contemporary cultural condition as one in which thought was lifeless and life was thoughtless. In attempting to retrieve the essentially human basis of all knowledge he took over insights from the hermeneutic tradition as a possible way through which the fullness of man's experience (_Erlebnis_) could be understood. We might say that Dilthey saw life itself as a text and affirmed the dialectical nature of human self-understanding. He emphasized the temporality of all human experience; that is, that everything we do as human beings lies within a horizon of past and future. There is no such thing as an a-historical man.

For Dilthey, language was the consummate expression of human experience, and as such was that which bonded the human community together. Language, he said, both transmits and stores the social and cultural heritage in which we participate, so that in language it is not simply *my* experience or *your* experience that is being expressed, but *our* experience. It is this essential commonality of all experience expressed through language that makes understanding (*Verstehen*) between human beings possible. But the commonality is built out of common experience in concrete situations, so that understanding itself is only possible when human action is seen in the context of its situatedness. As such, however, *Verstehen* is always an on-going approximative process, inevitably circular, as the interpreter understands one might say incrementally, the relation between action and context.

Heidegger, through Husserl and Dilthey, took up the question of understanding but reformulated it not as an epistemological question but an ontological one; that is, human understanding is at bottom a question of what it means to 'be' human. For Heidegger there could be no distinction, as Dilthey argued there was, between understanding in natural science and that in the human sphere, because understanding is itself a mode of being in the world. It lies ontologically prior to every act of existing. Like Dilthey, Heidegger was concerned that contemporary thinking was becoming incarcerated as a form of technical knowing, in which truth is understood largely in presentational terms. That is, thoughts, actions and truth statements (these last a consequence of an essentially Aristotelian correspondence theory of truth) are understood as merely ingredients in experience to be manipulated and controlled at will. Thinking is a matter of placing an idea before the mind's eye and truth is construed as the proper manipulation of ideas.

Heidegger argued that such a view was based primarily on a misinterpretation of Plato. He sought in the pre-socratic philosophers a notion of truth as fundamentally an expression of Being itself. Taking the Greek word for truth (alethea) as disclosure and unconcealment, Heidegger argued that understanding is that which occurs when the hiddenness of being is brought to light, or is allowed to show itself. He redefined the hermeneutic endeavour in phenomenological terms, borrowing from Husserl the notion that the ground of all possible knowledge is found by returning to "the things themselves" but, for Heidegger, as the things themselves disclose themselves not in consciousness (Husserl) but in their manifestness. Phenomenology involves letting something show itself as it "is", wherein to understand hermeneutically means "being led by phenomenon through a way of access genuinely belonging to it."

For Heidegger, that 'way of access' is language, for it is in language that the being of Being reveals itself most pristinely. Language is not simply a tool that human beings use for their own purposes in, say, communication or as a literary device. Rather language is that which lets man be man. Man is the servant of language, not the reverse, for it is in language that everything that is human--the'beingness' of human 'being'--is expressed. Man's past, present, and future hopes are all shown through what he says. To understand human 'being', therefore means to see into what is being spoken. It is to hear the Word (Logos) behind the words.

As a student of Heidegger, Gadamer develops more fully these themes of truth as disclosure, and language as the showing of the being of man. But more crucially, Gadamer deepens the notion of man's fundamental historicity. As we live in history, so human knowledge and understanding are always reflective of our historical situatedness. Genuine knowledge of what it means to be human, therefore, requires an attitude of one person to another whereby one allows oneself in a sense to be claimed by the other's otherness. Yet we do not 'speak across' to the other in acknowledgement of our fundamental separateness, but rather become open to the other in acknowledgement of our mutual participation as historical actors. Gadamer echoes Schleiermacher here but goes beyond him by stressing the relationship between such deep understanding and its essentially emancipatory character.

It is through being open to the otherness of others that I become aware of my own limitations, of my finitude, in time and space. But that very awareness 'breaks me open' so to speak, even more to the meaning and possibilities of being. It is dogmatism and methodological certitude, in the name of truth, that enslave man and suffocate the disclosure of being itself. That is why for Gadamer truth and method must be separated. Truth eludes the methodical man for at its heart, truth is dialectical. Method can only render the kind of truth already implicit in its method, even though method itself is not arrived at through method but dialectically through a questioning responsiveness to the matter being encountered.

With this discussion of the emergence of the hermeneutic tradition before us, the task now will be to search for a way in which the key hermeneutic insights can inform two interests, namely: (a) how we may approach research in the human life-world in a genuinely hermeneutical way; that is, in a way which is genuinely attentive to the manifestness of human experience, and (b) how we may proceed to interpret that manifestness in a way which is faithful to its own essential nature. These will be the concerns of the following chapter, particularly as they pertain to the overall purpose of this project, which is to disclose the essential meaning of children in adult experience.

# CHAPTER IV

# APPROACHING RESEARCH IN THE HUMAN LIFE-WORLD HERMENEUTICALLY

## Introduction

To take Schleiermacher, Dilthey, Heidegger and Gadamer seriously means to invite a redirection of current orientations in social research. Schleiermacher's identification of the unifying creative spirit between interpreter and original speaker; Dilthey's emphasis on the fullness of man's experience, expressed pre-eminently in language, as the basis for understanding; Heidegger's idea of truth as disclosure; and Gadamer's insistence on "effective" historical consciousness as the dialectical ground of knowing, are antithetical to commonly accepted analytical conceptions of research, based as those are on the fragmentation and isolation of experience, objective observation, the manipulation and control of variables, hypothesis formulation, experimental testing, and the presumption of universally valid context-free generalizations. But of course, as we have seen, all four men rooted their work in a conviction that such analytical notions of research were not merely limited in their usefulness, but in a fundamental way based on inadequate philosophical assumptions about 'the way things really are', and hence somehow responsible for the most profound alienations in modern life: the alienation of knowledge from action; of theory from practice; the separation of the knower from the object of his knowing and the things of the world one from another; and most crucially, the separation of knowledge of events from the meaning of those events.

We might note in passing that for several decades a small number of representatives from the so-called "hard sciences" has been involved in theorizing about their work in a manner curiously resonant with the insights of hermeneutical thinkers. Alfred North Whitehead's understanding (articulated about sixty years ago) of the process of ideas and the nature of knowledge as event;[1] Michael Polanyi's assessment of the self-revealing nature of insight, and of the dialectical relationship between the researcher, the subject of interest and the historical tradition in which the work is undertaken;[2] Thomas Kuhn's notion of the dialectic of paradigm shifts in science;[3] and Fritjof Capra's understanding of movement and interconnection in particle physics,[4] all reflect the hermeneutic sense of life as a living stream or tissue in which any absolute subject-object dichotomy as a basis for knowledge is inappropriate to the basic sense of their enterprise. They would all agree that from a human standpoint, a researcher can, by definition, never be removed from the work at hand in such a way as to make claims for a universally valid knowledge, objectively free.

But research today, particularly in the behavioural sciences, still is deeply rooted in positivistic, mechanistic, Newtonian ideas about the world as 'out there' somehow separate from the one investigating it. Robert Nisbet has noted that behavioural social scientists and educational researchers in particular, as slaves to method, have been most notably anxious to legitimate their efforts by "fluffing their scientific feathers"[5] (nineteenth century feathers we might add), even while natural scientists have been more open to understanding their work as art, seeing themselves as servants to truth rather than as manipulators and confirmers of prior prejudices.

## The Research Questions

The question then arises as to how the insights of the hermeneutic tradition can inform the research procedures in this study. The question of the study may be posed as, "what does it mean for us, as adults, to understand children?", but we want to understand this question in a rather special way. We do not want to take the notion of "children" for granted. We have seen that this is the chief failing of virtually every present tradition in the field of child study. The child, and children, in these traditions have been rendered as objects in their own right, suitable for study and research manipulation, but separated off from any reflective engagement within the being of those adults who, either biologially have brought them into being, or who have been charged publicly with the responsibility for their care, nurture, or education. We want to leave open the question of the discrete nature of children, in an attempt to penetrate the ontological unfolding of the meaning of children in the lives of those with whom they live.

Similarly, we want to understand 'understanding' in a different way than usual. That is, when we say we are searching for what it means to 'understand' children, we do not indicate this in any reified sense of believing that at some point we may claim to have arrived at understanding, and then call ourselves child experts. Rather we want to understand 'understanding' hermeneutically, which means seeing it with Heidegger as the ontological disclosure of what it means to be human, what it means to live as a human being. So that a claim to understanding children cannot be divorced from a showing of what it means to live with them, because as we have seen, hermeneutic understanding is that which unfolds in the dialogical engagement of one life with another. Understanding is not so much something that one person holds of another in any particular situation, but rather is that which is held between them in and of living situations. Or, we might say, understanding between persons is that which allows people in situations to live, to go on. This is an important distinction, for as we have seen with Gadamer, owned claims of understanding of others result in forms of dogmatism and tyranny which mortify others in their otherness and render shared situations as places of battle rather than as common living ground.

This raises the question of the possibility of doing hermeneutic research at all. That is, what indeed would be the nature of research in the human world which pushes off traditional notions of truth, understanding, and, indeed, results understood as findings from data? For one thing, as we have seen, doing research hermeneutically requires a change of attitude from any tradition which would claim to be able to "know the facts" of a given situation apart from an owning of oneself as inextricably a part of that situation. What one is researching is part of the same world in which one lives as researcher. It might be said that hermeneutic research involves a form of reconciliation in which researcher and subject are bound together in a common search for common understanding. Paul Ricoeur describes hermeneutic inquiry as a return to the "living circle"[6] at the heart of human affairs. Hermeneutic research is always a profoundly moral enterprise.[7] George Steiner emphasizes how Heidegger's ontology gives a certain sanctity to human "radical immanence" which in turn invites a relation of active involvement with others, of the necessary projection of the self into the "otherness" of surrounding humanity.[8] It is a profoundly affective relation to which Heidegger assigned the term Sorge or "Caring Care". For Heidegger, Sorge must "bring the individual home to the house of Being. It involves authentic self-realization and self-harvesting."[9] Gadamer terms the hermeneutic attitude as one of "fellow-feeling"[10] (Greek, gnóme), which issues not simply out of empathy, or a projection of oneself into the mind and being of others, but rather from a recognition of the essential human unity in the world, for "the world is the common ground, trodden by none and recognized by all, uniting all who speak with one another."[11] Hermeneutic inquiry involves an awakening of that which is held in common, a "fusion of horizons",[12] which is not a "getting inside another person, or the immediate fusing of one person in another", but "an agreement about the object of dialogue."[13] Furthermore, to reach an understanding with another in dialogue is "not merely a matter of total self-expression and the successful assertion of one's own point of view, but a transformation into a communion in which we do not remain what we were."[14]

## Questioning

The hermeneutic search for understanding realizes itself most essentially in questioning, but again, questioning as understood in a way different from that usually found, for example, in behavioural science models for interrogation, interviewing, etc.[15] Heidegger insists that it is in questioning that human nature comes to itself. Questioning is not simply a tool that can be used for other purposes, but is fundamental to authentic human existence.

> Only as a questioning, historical being does man come to himself; only as such is he a self. Man's

> selfhood means this: he must transform the being that discloses itself to him into history and bring himself to stand in it.[16]

In questioning, one exists as a "shepherd of Being",[17] not as, say, a cross-examiner who searches for proof of pre-established determinations.

Following the model of the Platonic dialectic in the Socratic dialogues, Gadamer makes an important distinction between hermeneutic questioning and both pedagogic and rhetorical questioning.[18] The pedagogic question, as typically found in classroom practice, contains the fundamental paradox of being a question without a questioner. That is, the teacher who asks a question of a student usually knows the answer in advance such that the question reflects not a genuine desire to know but rather an interest in knowing if an answer already known by the teacher is already known by the student. The rhetorical question not only has no questioner, but neither does it have an object. That is, rhetorical questioning is an asking of questions for the sake of asking questions--it has no point apart from the exercise of its own function.

Hermeneutic questioning, on the other hand, reflects a genuine desire to know. In order to be able to ask, one must truly want to know, which, as Gadamer says, "involves knowing that one does not know."[19] Hermeneutically, to ask a question means to bring something into the open, to achieve a true openness. The openness of a true question consists in the fact that the answer is not settled. A question that does not achieve such an openness is a "distorted" question, an "apparent" question,[20] which inhibits genuine disclosure or an authentic bringing into the open, because it holds on to false pre-suppositions.

Hermeneutically speaking, questioning is not a craft (Greek, techné) that can be taught as a way to mastering knowledge. A craft always pre-supposes a knowledge of its end, whereas an art pre-supposes a freedom in which a true object, idea or insight can find itself--its own end, its own purpose, its own point. Hermeneutic questioning is an art in the sense that, in insisting on the priority of questioning, it is able to free itself, and that which is laid open through its own activity, from the power of opinion, the power of prejudice, prejudgment. A true question "comes" to us; it "arises" or "presents itself" more than we raise it or present it,[21] and it does so out of the power of that which presses itself through authentic dialogue to a hearing. Hence, true questioning is more a "passion"[22] than an action. A question presses itself on us such that we can no longer avoid it and persist in our accustomed opinion.

In hermeneutic questioning, words have a maieutic quality; that is, they act as a midwife (Greek, maieuomai) in bringing out that which comes forth through questioning. This often involves an experience of negativity, which itself implies a question, as an invitation to consider how it is that things are not as one had supposed. The art of questioning hermeneutically is that of being able to go on asking questions; that is, the art of thinking. It is the art of conducting a real conversation (Greek, dialegomai), an authentic discourse (Greek, dialektos), which is true dialectic.[23]

## Conversation

In a genuine conversation those involved do not talk at cross purposes, or with the intention of scoring points, or of gaining an upper hand. Rather they speak with a common intention, which is to illuminate that which is held between them. There is the desire that they 'stay together' in the conversation through proper questioning. Gadamer draws attention to the reiterated "yesses" in the Platonic dialogues as reflective of this staying together.[24] It is the topic of the conversation, the true search for its true topicality, which sustains the conversation itself. Conversation is the art of testing that which is opened up through questioning--"not as the art of arguing, that is able to make a strong case out of a weak one, but the art of thinking that is able to strengthen what is said by referring to the object."[25] What emerges in its truth is the "logos", "which is neither mine nor yours and hence so far transcends the subjective opinion of the partners to the dialogue that even the person leading the conversation is always ignorant."[26] Dialectic, as the art of conducting a conversation, is the art of "seeing things in the unity of an aspect; i.e., it is the art of the formation of concepts as the working out of the common meaning."[27]

Appendix A contains a transcript of a conversation between the writer and one of his subjects concerning the living meaning of children for adults. The conversation was attempted in the Platonic spirit with which we have been dealing here. The questioner's questions are not so much designed to gather information for other purposes but rather posed as a way of opening up the topic under consideration, or else of clarifying it as it unfolds such that there is a genuine understanding between the partners as the conversation proceeds. The enthusiasm which greets the mutual identification of common understanding is notable on several occasions,[28] almost as if the partners had been possessed by something (Greek _enthusiasmos_, possessed by a god).

The silences too reflect several aspects of the conversation's life. One is the sense, on occasion,[29] that a point of general disclosure has been touched, a true insight opened, which in turn requires further space for its own life to be shown more fully. Silence too can reflect a "dead-end" in conversation; that is, the point at which the course of an insight has either spent itself or else is searching for redirection.[30] The conversation also reveals how genuine understanding is hermeneutically achieved between one mother and her daughter. An interpretation of the process of the disclosure of this understanding is attempted following the transcript.

It is in the nature of a true conversation that it is, in fact, never completed, because its very nature is to open up. True questioning is a thinking; the essence of human vitality. Gadamer speaks of "the conversation which we ourselves are."[31] The end of the transcript here does not represent the end of the conversation in any true sense, but only an arbitrary point of termination for practical purposes. Such a mention points to the important difference between speech as it unfolds in conversation and written language as text. The alienated quality of written language from the searching vitality of the spoken word becomes the focal hermeneutic interest of interpretation, in its desire to retrieve the conversational essence, or more accurately, the conversational point, mood, or direction of human language.

## The Spoken Word and the Written Word

The *spoken* word interprets itself to a remarkable degree. The manner of speech, its inflection, gesture, pace and the circumstances in which it is spoken all contribute to the way in which understanding in verbal conversation is accomplished apart from the pure mechanics of lingual activity. This presents a particular set of hermeneutic considerations when a project about life-world experience is undertaken in written form. For writing, even as the simple conversion of speech into transcript, involves a form of alienation which must be overcome if that which is spoken through the speech is to be made apparent. Yet speech and writing are not alien from one another as separate entities. In spoken conversation, the achievement of understanding through the density of gesture, tonality, etc. is a relatively easy matter at the same time as being true to the essential character of human self-procurement through language. Writing is not antithetical to the spoken word but rather is expressive of what Gadamer names as the "will to permanence",[32] and Hegel describes as a "will to hand things down, to make memory last."[33]

In writing, language gains its true intellectual quality. It is when confronted with a written tradition, therefore, that the nature of hermeneutic (understanding) consciousness acquires its full signficance. For the sign language of writing always refers back to the actual language of speech. The fact that spoken language is capable of being written down points to the fact that speech itself shares in the pure ideality of meaning that communicates itself in it.[34] It is this inherent ideality in speech that makes necessary, in hermeneutical life-world research, the transcription of speech and its written reconstruction as life story. For the rendering of speech to text makes public what is already inherent in speech itself; namely, that the truth spoken in it is always only possible truth; it points through its very specificity beyond itself. As Gadamer suggests,[35] it does not occur to people who are not used to reading that what is written down could be wrong, since what is written is taken to have the character of speech itself; namely self-authentication. But writing makes it possible for the ideational character of language to assume its full status. At the same time, however, the alienated quality of written language, its alienation from the gestural and contextual density of its original occasion, means that its signs need to be transformed back into speech and meaning. By this we mean, however, not the transformation of speech back to its original as a form of recapitulation, reproduction, or reconstruction, but rather to its capacity, as written word, to speak again in new and present circumstances. The meaning of what has been said is to be stated anew, as a living voice. Thus emerges that particular hermeneutic responsibility which is the "art" of interpretive writing.

Authentic interpretive (hermeneutic) writing is that which has the power to call a reader into the truth of what has been spoken. The art of writing, like the art of speaking, is not, hermeneutically, an end in itself, and therefore not the fundamental object of hermeneutical effort. For genuine understanding is to be entirely taken up with what is being written about, what calls from, or is evoked by the written word. This is similar to the case of a good public reading of poetry, for example, where the hearer is neither aware of the reader nor of the text per se, but rather is gathered up into that which is spoken through the words. Similarly, the object of hermeneutic writing is not artistry as a displaying of skill in the use of words, but rather an evocation of that which in turn calls (Latin, *e-vocare*) the reader into dialogue. Interpretation begins with a concern for one-sidedness, which it seeks to overcome, yet in the very overcoming produces again in different form. An interpreter seeks to bring what was spoken, out of its singular voice, into a more ideal form, one which makes explicit that which may have been silent or needs necessarily still to be said. But by its nature also, interpretation puts too much emphasis on one side of the thing, so that something else has yet to be said to restore the balance. "It is not the weakness but the strength of the oracle that it is ambiguous."[36]

## The Manifest Course of Life-World Inquiry in this Study

In this study, the search for understanding the experience of living with children took a course that had three distinct stages. In the first, people were sought out who would be willing to participate as conversants, and who were involved with children, either with their own, or as educators. Of course, every person is involved with children in one way or another, insofar as we were all children once ourselves, and we all carry, in a certain way, our own childhoods within us, even as adults. It is this universal personal intimacy with the subject which enables us to say anything about it at all. With attention to Gadamer's emphasis on the experience of negativity as the locale of genuine experience, the attempt was also made to hold conversations with those not only involved in conventional ways with children, but also with those whose experience lay outside of the 'normal.' Such persons included a mother whose children had been taken away from her by a social service agency on the basis of a court judgment of her maternal incompetence. One couple had a daughter born severely mentally retarded, as well as stricken with cerebral palsy. One woman was a retired widow with grown children. Over the course of one month, four meetings were held with a group of four teenage girls in a residential home for unwed mothers. Conversations were also held with two people who were neither married nor parents.

Parents in more conventional settings were also visited. One was a young couple in the traditional nuclear family mould; he a graduate student at a large university, she a former community health nurse now dedicated to the role of wife and mother. They were the parents of two pre-school age boys. One woman was a suburban housewife whose husband was a building contractor. They had suffered the death of a baby girl before the arrival of their present young son who now has a history of medical problems. A young father of two pre-school children was also chosen.

Adults involved with other people's children, i.e., children in settings removed from home, were limited to those in school settings. These included a school principal with twenty-five years experience; a younger vice-principal with ten years experience; a teacher of early primary grades (grades 1, 2, 3); a teacher of intermediate grades (grades 4, 5, 6); and a Special Education teacher.

In the case of all of those who participated in the study, permission was granted to tape record the conversations. The recording of speech on tape is a common feature of contemporary social science research which deserves more hermeneutic attention than it has received to date. In many ways, it might be understood as standing as an intermediary between spoken word and written text. On the one hand, its use reflects deeply that "will to permanence" which Gadamer describes as the essential feature of the written word. At the same time, however, it has no interpretive power, no voice of its own which is able to speak beyond what is spoken, which is the true function of literary work. The value of the tape recording of speech lies in its power to reproduce the spoken word in a more dense way than, say, verbatim transcripts are capable of doing. That is, it is able to carry the broader sonic universe in which the original spoken word is embedded. For interpretive purposes, when the spoken word is being re-heard, what becomes available through the tape, apart from the explicit words, are background noises, unnoticed vocal inflections and tonalities of speech, etc., all of which can be brought to bear in a more genuine hearing of what is being said.

A sample of transcripted conversations recorded during the study is provided in Appendix B. It was decided not to include these in the body of the present work for reasons inherent in hermeneutic understanding itself. One is that human conversation around any topic of mutual interest is never something that proceeds in a linear progressive manner, with clear direction and purpose in evidence at all times. Indeed, as we saw in our discussion of questioning and conversation, human dialogue has much more a circular character, one which weaves its way around the topic at hand, making it clear at some points, and clouding it at others. This means that sometimes the conversations have a rambling quality which, on the surface, may give the impression of being "pointless."

Perhaps more important, however, is the case that mere reproduction (of speech, action, work, etc.) does not in itself constitute genuine hermeneutic activity. This is what distinguishes hermeneutic inquiry from, for example, ethnography,[37] grounded theory,[38] and historicist forms of historiography[39] in which the attempt is made to reconstitute human words and deeds on their own terms and to explain them from within their own contexts. From a hermeneutic point of view, this entirely misses the point of what is of the essence in human affairs, which is that words and deeds, by their nature, "reach out" to others; they "speak across" generations, cultures, contexts and situations as a form of contribution to the universal voice which is man in the world. The fundamental hermeneutic motive, therefore, is to identify the essence of that speaking and to make it "speak again" in present circumstances, thereby reconciling it to its appropriate place in contemporary understanding. What is given alongside the transcripts of Appendix B, however, is a form of commentary entitled "First Reflections." These may be understood as representing a kind of primary ontological signalling for the interpreter, issuing from early 'hearings' of the speech in conjunction with its contextual audiences. The first reflections reflect the way the speech of the original conversations spoke specifically to the writer through its gesture, tone, suggestibility, etc.; pointing through itself to its deeper ontological direction.

In this study, rather than presenting transcript material as a form of reproduction, an intermediary form of evidence is proposed (Chapter V) which attempts to do justice both to the contextual richness of the speaking occasions (gesture, intonation, landscape, situatedness, etc.), as well as to the hermeneutic intention of enabling the speech to declare itself more explicitly. What is proposed has three features. Firstly, an introduction to each person is given which describes briefly his or her "landscape"; that is, the situatedness and context out of which the speech comes. The introduction also includes description of the manner of each person's presentation of self as revealed through the conversation event. Much of the sense of these descriptions emerged through the occasions of personal contact between the writer and those involved in the study, when informal talk provided for an opening of those features which characterized each person. The talk on those occasions is not regarded as "small talk" but rather mundane talk; i.e., it speaks of each person's basic stance in the world (Latin, _mundus_).

The introductions provide a point of entry into the second feature of this intermediary phase of interpretation, which can be termed a descriptive narrative of each person's experience with children. This narrative is woven out of the transcripted speech of the conversations in such a way as to retain a faithfulness to the overall thrust of each dialogue at the same time as providing the speech with a greater integrity, unity, and voice. As a hermeneutic activity, the narratives reflect a form of editing which is able to be sensitive to the nuances, enthusiasms, silences, intonations, etc. of the recorded speech, which features in turn assist during the editing process in focussing on the essence of what is being said.

In a recent article entitled "Religious and Poetical Speaking",[40] Gadamer draws attention to the way in which meaning is disclosed in language, and particularly in narration that "one can never exhaust what one can tell",[41] but also, what it is that one tells through telling is not captured by the telling itself. Rather, it "floats"[42] in the midst of the telling. The words and the speech merely provide the medium through which the deeper meaning of the narrative reveals itself. Narration, then, is a kind of representation (German, Vorstellung), the meaning of which is akin to the use of the word in geometry where one "makes something visible."[43] In the course of reading the descriptive narratives of this study, the evocative nature of the personal accounts is frequently apparent. That is, often one becomes aware of how the speech is pointing beyond itself, pointing to the ontology which is innocently hidden within it. The narratives then become sources of ontological disclosure. A third aspect of this preliminary hermeneutic, then, is an identification of these "Ontological Pointings" which run through the narratives. These are noted alongside each narrative as it unfolds, and are based on the "First Reflections" noted on the transcripted speech as shown in Appendix B.

Finally, within the overall structure of this study, there is the most important hermeneutic task, which may also be the most difficult, and that is what was referred to earlier as the "art" of hermeneutic writing. The art of writing, like the art of speaking, is not an end in itself and, therefore, not in itself the fundamental object of hermeneutical effort. Rather, interpretive writing, in its highest sense, consists in what Gadamer describes as a "being led to think the material through"[44] to its true object. There is an art of writing that "comes to the aid of thought"[45] and it is to this that the art of understanding is allied, largely through the inherently speculative quality of all language and its evocative, poetic calling.

Even though we pay deep attention to the subjective voices of each of the individuals in the study as presented in the narratives, we know too that what comes into language is something different from the spoken word itself. A word is a word only because of what comes into language in it. Whatever is said is held together, in the unity of one meaning, with an infinity of what is not said. The hermeneutic art, then, is to ensure that what is said is understood in this way, in the fullness of its spoken and silent unity. This is what gives to hermeneutic writing its inherently speculative quality. 'Speculative' is the antithesis of the dogmatism of everyday experience. Hence the truly hermeneutic imagination does not abandon itself directly to the tangibility of words and appearances, or to the fixed determinateness of the meant, but is able to reflect that which brings to fullness what lies silent. As Gadamer suggests,[46] "every word causes the whole of the language to which it belongs to resonate and the whole of the view of the world which lies behind it to appear." The occasionality of human speech is not a "casual imperfection of its expressive power." It is, rather, the logical expression of the living vituality of speech, that brings a totality of meaning into play without being able to express it totally. All human speaking is finite in such a way that there is within it an infinity of meaning to be elaborated and interpreted.

It is this sense of the infinity of meaning in finite human language which is the fundamental interest of the hermeneutic art of writing which finds its highest expression in the poetic word. "Poetry shows men in conversation",[47] says Gadamer, but what is given in the poetic statement is not the statement that a written report would contain, but in a mysterious way the whole of the conversation as if present. The reality of the poetic word involves a detachment of what is said from the subjective opinions of both speaker and author into an ideality which alone provides the venue for its validity. But it is precisely because the written interpretive, poetic word detaches the sense of what is said from the person saying it that the written word makes the reader, in his understanding of it, the arbiter of its claim to truth. Thus it is that the written word is, in fact, in a special way the true object of hermeneutics.

There is implicit in all writing the claim that it can be referred back to speech, back to that to which speech itself refers, its true object. And writing, because of its necessarily one-sided presentation, finds its fulfillment only within the new conversation between reader and text. This is the particular weakness of writing, what Plato referred to as its "greater helplessness"[48] when compared to speech, which is its capacity to fall victim to misunderstanding. But writing has its other side too, which is that it demonstrates with greater clarity the genuinely dialectical task of understanding. For as in conversation, understanding in written form must seek to strengthen the meaning of what is said, but it achieves this strengthening, this highlighting, through detachment, ideality, and emphasis which in turn finds its validation only within the eternal conversation of mankind. Hermeneutic writing, conceived out of a genuine attentiveness to the speech of those participating in this study (a "thinking through" of that speech), is the concern of Chapter VI. The hermeneutic process by which such writing was achieved will be discussed more fully at the beginning of the chapter.

In summary, then, the manifest course of hermeneutic inquiry in this study may be outlined as follows. Hermeneutic conversations were held with people in a variety of circumstances and milieux concerning the meaning of children in their lives. The conversations were tape recorded and transcribed, and first reflections concerning their mood and direction noted. From the conversations and initial reflections was developed a reconstructed narrative which attempted to be faithful to the landscape, nuance, and context of each speech, as well as faithful to the integrity of each life story. An interpretive commentary is given alongside each narrative, with the ontological themes interpreted to point from the speech itself noted. The reconstructed narratives plus the pointing provide the substance of the next chapter, Chapter V. Chapter VI represents an experiment in the art of hermeneutic writing which draws its interpretive basis not only from explicit reference to the ontological disclosures of Chapter V but also from the poetic and speculative nature of genuine hermeneutic writing.

# CHAPTER V

# BRINGING EXPERIENCE TO SPEECH THROUGH HERMENEUTIC DIALOGUE: ESTABLISHING A GROUNDED TEXT

In this chapter, the interest is to bring to speech the experience of living with children as it has been expressed by those with whom conversations were held. As discussed in the previous chapter, however, simply to present transcripts of the conversations would not necessarily represent a true fidelity to the fundamental nature and intention of the speech. For from a hermeneutic standpoint, the true nature of speech is always to speak beyond itself; that is, speech always points to that which is spoken through it. Any person's speech not only always emerges from the context of a total life but also that life itself is already immersed in a world which grants to individual utterance the grounds of its own comprehension.

So what is proposed here has two aspects which can be understood as an intermediary form of interpretation. It stands intermediate between the naked speech of the transcripts (samples of which are in Appendix B) and the highest form of hermeneutic endeavor, which is the art of hermeneutic writing, attempted in Chapter VI. What is proposed here is a reconstruction of each person's speaking as a form of narrative life story, coupled with a form of ontological commentary or "pointing" on the narrative as it unfolds.

The "pointing" represents an attempt to highlight and strengthen what it is, ontologically, that is spoken through the speech.

This linking of reconstructed narrative with ontological pointing is developed from an attention to what becomes apparent through the transcripts themselves, which is that each conversation can be heard as containing certain identifiable undergirding passions or preoccupations which lurk or float as organizing principles within the total conversation and out of which the language of living with children speaks. In the case of Maxine Lovett, for example (transcript 1), the unmarried pregnant teenager, one 'hears' throughout the speech of her personal sense of homelessness and of her deep searching for a place to call home. We can understand this homelessness as a form of undergirding metaphor for making sense of her total story, such that when we come to reconstruct a narrative from her conversation we can interpretively identify what it is that gives the speech its unifying mood and direction.

The mood and direction of each conversation is highlighted in the transcript section (Appendix B) by a column titled "First Reflections." These reflections note not only some of the nuances, gestures, intonalities, etc. of the speech, which are of assistance in gaining an appreciation of the integrity of the conversation, a sense of integrity required for an appropriate reconstruction, but the reflections also include some preliminary interpretive commentary which serves as a basis for the ontological pointings alongside the reconstructions in this chapter. A sample of transcripts is included in Appendix B so that the reader can interpretively observe how the reconstructions and ontological pointings may be derived from the natural conversations and the preliminary first reflections.

The reconstructions presented here, then, can be understood as a form of interpretive editing of the complete conversations. This interpretive editing gives the speech of the conversations not only a focus which is faithful to the overall mood and direction of the entire speech, but also it tries to provide the conversations with a genuine speaking quality in a hermeneutic sense. That is, by reconstructing the speech as a narrative form, the interest is to raise to a more prominent voice that which is latent in all conversation but perhaps not immediately apparent, hidden as it may be by any conversation's natural meandering. The hermeneutic speaking of the reconstructed narratives is enhanced further by an ontological pointing which tries to recover more explicitly the ideational character of the speech.

Each reconstruction is preceded by a brief description of the situational landscape of the participant. Included in this is a noting of the present circumstance of each person, along with one or two comments concerning their manner of speaking. This landscaping is derived from the writer's overall acquaintance with the life worlds of the participants and the personal familiarity which developed with each participant through the course of the conversational events.

The landscapes are provided to give the reader an orienting point of entry into the reconstructions which are organized into three broad categories: (a) people not directly involved with children; (b) parents of children; and (c) those involved with other people's children. Those in the first cateogry, two unmarried teenage girls about to give birth (Maxine Lovett and Rosanne Triste), are included with those whose parenting has taken a more conventional course (John Goodfellow, Louise Kinderloss, Warren and Ardelle Parley, and Mrs. Duguesne). Also presented in this category are Bill and Alice Nesbitt, parents of a mentally handicapped child, and Eunice Dole, a mother judged parentally incompetent by a government social service agency. All of the people in the third category are involved with children in school settings. Mrs. Ainsley is an elementary school principal, Kevin Souris an elementary school vice-principal, Wendy Bellum a grade one teacher, James Paterna a teacher of upper elementary grades, and Joan Underwood a teacher of mentally handicapped children.

## (a) HOW CHILDREN ARE EXPERIENCED IN THE LIVES OF SOME OF THOSE NOT DIRECTLY INVOLVED WITH THEM

### (i) Daniel Partoutti: A single man with no children

Dan is a single man in his mid-twenties enjoying his second year as a junior member in a civil engineering firm. The middle son of a large family, his parents were Italian immigrants to Canada in the nineteen thirties. Dan bears his Latin origins through the great animation of his speech, and also his many emphatic hand and facial gestures. His countenance is enhanced by rich dark hair, a dark, full but neatly trimmed moustache, and dark eyes which flashed brightly in the course of our conversation. At times, though, he seemed distracted in his speech. At the beginning, I sensed a resentment of the questioning, but this seemed to dissipate as the conversation began to take its own course.

Dan lives in a high-rise apartment in a major city on Canada's West Coast. Before our formal conversation began, I looked out the bay-window of his apartment and marvelled at the spectacular ocean view. He remarked, "Pretty fantastic, eh? That's one of the things I like about this place." In the corner of the living room area is a pile of scuba-diving gear. He described diving as his "major pre-occupation of the moment."

| Reconstructed Narrative | Ontological Pointing |
|---|---|
| Dan had been living with his girlfriend for over a year, but they had "split" two months prior to my visit. | |
| I just couldn't see myself being married to the woman. We're still friends, but she wanted a permanent commitment 'right now!' And I just didn't feel and don't feel that that's my space at the moment. | Marriage can be perceived as commitment.<br>Commitment requires a certain space. |
| I ask him why. | |
| Well, for one thing, to me marriage means kids. And I simply can't afford to support a family at the moment.<br>Things are only now just beginning to stablize financially at work. And, as you know, buying a house in this city, or even renting one, is almost impossible. Yet I really like living here. My God, where else in the world would, could you have access to so many things all at once--diving, sailing, skiing, big city life. It's fantastic! | There is a special space in which children can be supported and co-exist with parents. There may be socio-economic necessities of a space for the realization of commitment.<br>Life experienced as accessibility to things. |
| Does this mean that he's giving up | |

the idea of having children in the future?

| | |
|---|---|
| Well, sometimes I sort of feel caught in a bind. On the one hand I think, 'Yeah, kids would be great, and I think I'd make a great father'. On the other hand I also think of all the hassles--you know, money problems, being tied down. Also, I think of the mess the world's in today, and who'd want to bring kids into it anyway. And my own parents didn't have such a great marriage and I've thought at times that if it wasn't for us kids they wouldn't have stayed together. I wouldn't want that to be the case with me. | There are ambivalences preceding, perhaps impeding, commitment:<br>-the desire for paternity vs. its perceived negative responsibilities<br>-the world as uncongenial to children<br>-the memory of children sealing parental unhappiness (generational speaking through memory). |

What would be, for him, the positive aspects of having children?

| | |
|---|---|
| Well, sometimes I feel that, "Gee, I'm not getting any younger and if I'm going to have kids I wouldn't want to be an old man when they're | Children as setting agenda for adults. |
| growing up. I'd like to be able to share my life with them--you know, go places, do things together. | An agenda of sharing a life. |
| Also, you know, sometimes it's a strange thing, and it usually happens immediately after I've made love to a woman, find myself asking myself, 'Is this all there is to it?' Sex, I mean. I mean, it's great--I love making love--but somehow I wonder why I'm doing it. That's not anything I've told anyone before. Maybe kids have something to do with it. | Sexual love as a pointing to children, in spite of one's own practices perhaps designed to prevent them.<br>To love making love may deflect the questioning of love's true direction, which may be to love beyond oneself, through children. |

Is he involved with anyone at the moment with whom he can envision a marriage and a family?

| | |
|---|---|
| Not really. I'm sort of playing the field right now. There's so many beautiful girls in this city, it's hard to imagine settling down with just one. (laugh) | The deflection of marriage/family means to play the field, and to render the questioning of love as not serious. |

### (ii) Anne Passmore: A single woman with no children

Anne is a successful professional woman in her mid-thirties. She has never been married and has never borne a child. At one time an elementary school teacher, she later obtained her doctorate in microbiology and worked in the field of cancer research. She now teaches at the university level.

Her speech is characterized by a quality reflected in many other aspects of her self-presentation, such as dress and home decor: a quality of distinctive, meticulous care. At times her language seems almost 'too' precise, articulated with a clarity beyond the norm for casual speech. It is highly controlled speech, but finds its relief in periodic outbursts of infectious laughter emerging from deep within her.

We begin our conversation by my asking how she feels as a single woman without children, answering questions about having children.

"How do I feel? Ask! No problem."

Affirmation of personal control.

She continues.

> I've never seen myself having children. I've never thought seriously of having children. I would say I've never wanted children. It's not entirely true, because there was one very short period in one particular year .... Everyone else that I knew was married and having children so I felt different. Somehow I had this idea that maybe I ought to get married and have a baby, but except for that period ... I've never thought I wanted children ... it's just never been one of my ambitions. Not something I wanted to do. Does that answer your question?

Having children requires a wanting them, which is prior to a thinking of them.

Not having children means feeling different. Perception of marriage and children as obligation. What is it that is sensed as an "ought"?

Early in our conversation Anne tells me she has always seen herself as being different from others, even as a young girl.

> When the other little girls would talk about getting married and having children and what kind of wedding dress they would wear .... I was out of it. (laugh) (Even in those days) I wanted to be a researcher.

The possibility of children not being a part of one's consciousness. Not to consider children means to feel in a different space--"out of it."

I ask her if she has ever experienced physiological yearnings for bearing children.

> No. And I'm actually glad. Because I can't imagine there being many things more frustrating than wanting to have children and not being in a position to do so ....

To want to have children means to be in a position to have them. Children perceived as requiring certain conditions, space, etc.

How does Anne respond to the stereotypical label that a woman without children is somehow unfulfilled?

> Well, one response is to ask why should I have to defend myself? Why should you assume that because I don't have children I'm 'less' in some way, than people who have children?

Childlessness requires no defense.

Children are not required for a complete life.

In discussing the topic with her single female friends, having children is "just not something that particularly interests us."

> The kinds of things you have to do in looking after children aren't exactly intellectually stimulating or aesthetically stimulating kinds of things.

Intellectual and aesthetic stimulation thought to take precedence over the obligation of looking after children, which is perceived as neither.

Then there occurs a fundamental shift in tone in Anne's language.

> It's quite possible--I will admit this, which many of my woman friends who do not have children will not admit, that it's quite possible that, should I find myself with children by some unfortunate or strange occurrence, that my attitude would change completely.

A change in personal circumstances could initiate an admission of a more receptive attitude to children.

She continues:

> It's quite possible that, well, in the first place, if I should get married ... that I would feel a much more maternal instinct.

A permanent relationship could precipitate maternal instincts intuited as thwarted by lack of relationship?

> I would only ever seriously consider having children if I should establish some kind of permanent relationship with somebody who wanted children. Then, who knows how I would feel about it. I might still not wish to have children around, but I expect my feelings might very well change.

A permanent relationship as opening the possibility of children.

> If I should decide to ... if someone should come along with whom I wanted to share my life, and he should want children, then I might say, 'Well, of course we'll have children!'

Sharing a life with a man could mean sharing it also with children.

## (b) HOW CHILDREN ARE EXPERIENCED IN THE LIVES OF THOSE ABOUT TO HAVE CHILDREN OR WHO HAVE THEM ALREADY

### (i) Maxine Lovett: An unmarried mother-to-be (transcript in Appendix B)

Maxine was one of a group of four unmarried pregnant teenage girls who agreed to participate in this study. All were resident at Elm Grove Centre, a facility designed to provide basic home care and counselling for girls waiting out their terms. On the surface, sixteen-year-old Maxine does not seem to have a care in the world. She laughs easily, and in conversation is quite assertive and self-possessed. Her petite stature, and, by popular standards, cute appearance, make her an attractive girl, a quality not dispelled by her openly flirtatious manner.

At the time of our meeting, she had been living away from her immediate family for about a year, in the course of which she had moved around most of Canada's western provinces. We began with my asking her some general questions about herself, including an inquiry as to her place of origin.

"I don't really come from anywhere", she replied. She had been "having problems at home" and was "travelling around looking for a place where I could settle down and try to make it on my own." After finally finding a home with her aunt, she recalls, "I found out I was pregnant."

Problems in the home space produce a child without a sense of home. A homeless child looks for a home.

She discovered her pregnancy in the sixth to eighth week, yet

> when I found out for sure I already knew for sure. It was really weird, because as soon as I, I did it, you know, I thought, you know, I'm gonna get pregnant, because I wasn't using any .... So I was worried about it, and I worried and worried and worried, and then I went to the doctor, and I was worried. I was just hopin' that she (the doctor) would say it was negative. But she said, 'Come in and sit down,' and I just knew it. It didn't really bother me though.
>
> I *knew* I was pregnant. Like, I knew I should get pregnant, because I didn't use anything, he didn't use anything, and I just kind of figured ....

Medical verification of pregnancy only verifies a prior sense of symbiotic knowing.

The hope in a negative medical result reflects a positive hope that a child will not be conceived in these circumstances.

Had she thought of what might happen, before engaging in intercourse? "No, (laugh), you don't think of those things right then. You think of it after."

Sexual intercourse and the possibilities of conception are not pre-eminently matters of rational consideration.

After having her pregnancy confirmed, Maxine's first reaction was to have an abortion "because it was a quick way out. You know, you go into the hospital one day and you come out and it's over." But her aunt, a strong Catholic, dissuaded her from aborting, and instead to seek counselling as to how to proceed. Maxine agreed to this: "... maybe she can straighten me out, help me, you know, decide for sure." The counsellor "showed me pictures and everything, and it was really gross. So I decided not to (abort) ... And I've been happy about it since." She is pleased about giving a little baby to a couple who "can't have kids. If I can give them a little baby where it can get lots of love, I think that's great."

Impulse to quickly dispose of a mistake.

Perception of self in this condition as twisted.

Redemption of twistedness by perception of self as one who can give a child to another.

A child requires love.

Even though she is six months into her pregnancy term, she

> (doesn't) even feel pregnant right now (laugh). I don't know. I don't really know. Like, it hasn't really hit me yet--like, I haven't got really big like the other girls. Like, I can still go out and go to parties, and that, you know.

To feel oneself truly pregnant 'with child' requires a feeling of being inhabited, and of one's life now being different.

When we were talking as a group, I asked the girls if they felt they were participating in a social trend of some sort. I ask Maxine for her personal opinion about this.

> Oh, ya. Like, half my friends have babies, or have had abortions, or have given up their kids. You know, it's just something that happens every day. I'm not the first and I'm not going to be the last. It's just part of life that you've got to accept.

The conception of children, now even amongst unwed teenagers, is a part of life.

Why has this become more and more common?

> There's so many forms of birth control, that everybody's right into sex, right, and then some girls, because all the other girls are getting right into sex, they just think it's the thing for me to do too. And they don't think about birth control, and then it happens. But 20 years ago, morals were a lot stronger. It was really considered a sin to have sex before you were married. But now, like I figure if you enjoy it, you just do it. And that's the way a lot of girls think and that's why a lot of girls end up in trouble ....

There is a conflict between physiological readiness and a predetermined social agenda. In actual experience, the inclination to sexual activity and its biological consequences lies prior to the rationality of birth control.

> But, you know, you have it once and you just enjoy it. And that's what happened to me. I love it. Like I was on birth control pills for awhile--I was living with my boyfriend for awhile so I had to. And then I moved out and I just figured I didn't need them anymore. And I was kind of broke so I couldn't afford to go and get the prescription no more, and I felt I didn't need it. And

Contemporary mores equate sexual activity with enjoyment and recreation, not re-creation. Thus girls "end up in trouble."

| | |
|---|---|
| then that one stupid time (laugh), I just needed them and I wasn't on it. | What form of thinking is required for the moment of a child's conception to be thought of as "stupid"? |

Does she have plans for when she has completed her stay at the Elm Grove Centre?

| | |
|---|---|
| Oh ya, I've got plans. What I really want is to get through school and get a really good job where I can travel. | Having plans. |
| I quit school for a little while because I was having problems at home and I was travelling around looking for a place where I could settle down and try to make it on my own .... | Problems at home precipitate a travelling and a searching for a place to "be |

She also hopes to travel, like her parents, who both work for airline companies, and get travel privileges.

| | |
|---|---|
| Like, I mean, next weekend my dad's going to Mexico for three days, just to get some sun. And then Saturday morning my mom's going to find somewhere to go to try to get some sun. I mean, I think it's so nice to do that. | The tenacity of parental life-models in a child's experience. |

I suggested to Maxine that she seemed to like travelling, and seeing the world.

| | |
|---|---|
| Her response: "I've seen the world." | What allows a sense of having already seen the world? |

### (ii) Rosanne Triste: Another unmarried mother-to-be

Rosanne, an eighteen-year-old, bears a very different presence than Maxine. A quieter, softer girl, her eyes speak of an open, trusting and vulnerable spirit, as well as a certain sadness. She had known the father of her child about four months before conception, when she and Len had been working together at a pizza parlour.

Because of a long-standing sense of conflict with her younger sister at home, Rosanne had moved out of the house; first to live with her older sister in an apartment, then, when conflicts arose between them, into an apartment of her own. She confessed to hating living on her own. At first, after leaving home, she had continued with school while working part-time to pay the rent. "But work became more and more interesting and school less so", so she dropped out of school "temporarily".

For Rosanne, a central debate was whether to keep her child or give it up for adoption, that is, "surrender it" (the technical term used at Elm Grove).

> I still have questions in my mind, even though I know what's right, what I should do, what's logical, I guess.

For a mother, logical reflection will not put to rest the question of her fundamental relationship to her child.

Does she mean it seems logical to keep it or to give it up?

> To give it up. Well, it's the best thing. You're only eighteen years old! I keep telling myself that. And I know damn well that it wouldn't last (i.e., her relationship with Len). And then where would I be two years down the road, having been dependent on him and then all of a sudden, bang, I'm on my own again .... But my emotions tell me to keep it.

Reasoning tells her to give her child up.

Emotions tell her to keep it.

How did she feel when she found out she was pregnant?

> I was happy. It was really strange, 'cause I thought, now that I think back on it, why wasn't I shocked, you know. But I really wanted it. Then I got--well, everyone acted like it was such a fatality for it to have happened.

The social voice rises to overrule a personal happiness at word of a child.

What was the nature of her happiness?

> I guess I just cared for the guy a lot, and I wanted his kid. That's the way I felt. And I thought he would be happy too.

The desire for a child emerges out of a love between a man and a woman.

Although Rosanne and Len had never discussed marriage,

> every guy I'd ever met I thought about marriage, but now I think it's absolutely absurd, the thought of marrying him. Like, just because you're pregnant, it's no reason to marry. Well, I can't say it's no reason ....

To meet a man raises the possibility of marriage. The question of conception of a child should lead to commitment between a woman and a man

Len, the father, also seems to have been ambivalent about whether to keep the child or give it up. On first hearing of Rosanne's pregnancy,

... or between a man and a woman.

> He didn't seem to be too upset ... until about three days after, and then he told me that it couldn't be his ..., (and that) I must have been fooling around or something.

The possibility of denying paternity always exists, but not denying maternity.

Later, though, under the influence of his parents, Len urged Rosanne to keep the child. He suggested they either "move in together" or else he would support her financially in return for visiting rights to the child. The projected uncertainty of these alternatives brought Rosanne to stay with her "logical" decision to "surrender" the child. Her own father's reaction to the news of her pregnancy was "better than I thought it would be". It wasn't Rosanne that he was "mad at", but Len, because "(Len) took off, like, deserted." Rosanne's

Lack of commitment between a man and a woman renders the space for a child uncertain.

father had gotten her mother pregnant before marriage, but "he stuck by her, and they had a family and made it. So he thinks there's no reason the guy shouldn't stay, you know."

Recapitulation of parental models. The continuity of generations.

Had she been practicing birth control before conception? Her older sister (twenty-five) had urged her to "go on the pill" when she (Rosanne) moved into her own apartment.

The controlling of birth is taken for granted by some women.

> I thought 'Why?', you know. I had this guilt about taking birth control. I thought, 'Well, I'm just taking it because I'm planning on doing this', and it just didn't seem right .... That's what bugged me. It made me feel I was planning on (sex).

For others, the question of "why" is important.

For them, in certain instances, it just doesn't seem right. They don't want sex to be part of a formal plan.

Her sister had warned her "because I was out on my own, and you're bound to be...going out with somebody."

To be on one's own sometimes means to be "bound" to go out with somebody.

How does she feel about the whole situation now?

> Well, I wish it was over. My decision was made. But I still think that I'm going to give it up. Like it changes things. It's going to make it a lot more to think about, but like I said, my reasons for

Having a child changes things.

giving it up are still there, because I don't want to end up an old lady and never have gone anywhere .... I think it's mainly more matured me. 'Cause you have to, I don't know, it's hard to explain what I mean .... Like, for me, at first my feelings were all 'I'm going to keep it no matter what', but that's so immature when I look back, because 'no matter what' means a lot .... And I think even then I knew what I should do. But I wouldn't admit it. And that was my fault.

It stunts certain forms of going afar.
It makes one more mature.
An ambivalence remains for a mother who wants to keep her child but rationally acknowledges the impracticality of doing so.

### (iii) John Goodfellow: A married father with two children

(transcript in Appendix B)

John, in his late twenties, is the father of two children: Brian, age eight, and Ellen, age four. His superior intelligence becomes quickly apparent when he speaks, for his conversation displays a self-insight which goes beyond the usual. His speech also, though, has a very careful quality to it, a deliberateness which sometimes seems to betray a self-doubt. On the surface, his demeanour is highly genial, but at the same time there is a certain solitariness and personal distance in his bearing. In his home he has built a room which he calls "my Dark Room". It is completely blacked out, lined with sound-proofing, and fully stocked with hi-fi and stereophonic equipment. He describes it as "his" room; a place into which to retreat and meditate.

When John and Sheila had been "going together on and off" for about two and a half years, they discovered Sheila was pregnant. Shortly before the "news" of the pregnancy (first announced as a "suspicion"), John had been planning to break off with Sheila and travel to New Zealand. He even had a ticket booked,

> just to get a totally different outlook for a change. And also I guess I had anticipated, following that, pursuing a career of some kind. (I had) great expectations of, say, working as a geographer (I was doing a degree in honours geography at that time), and the experience had whetted my appetite for travel.

A child arrives in the midst of a set of plans.

Also, he had been thinking of taking up again with an old girl friend with whom he'd been in love.

The past is never forgotten.

> When things like this (the pregnancy) come up, your life flashes before your eyes, your whole past, and future expectations, plans, etc.
>
> At the announcement of the 'news', all hell broke loose with Sheila's mother. I was being threatened with all kinds of things and really was made to feel very small. She (Sheila's mother) was trying to put me in a position where I felt totally obliged to do what she wanted.

News of a child's coming can precipitate a rapid recollection, evaluation, etc. of one's own life.
Such news can sometimes be bad news.
The expectation of a child can be used to manipulate others.
A child holds power over adults.

That experience "definitely began to throw another monkey-wrench" into John's decision about marriage.

> I was wondering now, what's been going on all these years? What kind of a life has my wife been experiencing? Has she been showing me a false side of her? And I had no one to go to to find these questions out. I had strictly to take my own intuition and logic and to count what chances I was going to be taking. And it turned out some of my greatest fears were real ones, that in a very real sense my wife knew nothing but cold conflict. It's improved, I think, over the eight years we've lived together, but it's still ... far short of my expectations.

News of a child's arrival brings to the surface a wondering about what has been going on for years.
A child brings a search for authentication of who we are as adults.
It can be a lonely search.
Sometimes one's greatest fears turn out to be real.
Expectations can fall short.
A child can show adults to be in conflict.

On several occasions in the conversation, John spoke of his own happy childhood. As the oldest of ten children, he had been the one all his siblings had looked up to, and through his own primary family life he had learned to love children, and enjoyed the various responsibilities he had had to shoulder in helping to raise his brothers and sisters. With the pregnancy, he felt he had "let the family down."

The possibility always exists for failing in living up to one's ideals.

| | |
|---|---|
| As far as the birth itself was concerned, because of his experience with childbirth in his own family "infants were certainly no surprise--nothing new." But they had always been "something special." | Though the birth of a child is a common event, it is also something special. |
| And now to have my own, or to be partly responsible for my own was a great thrill ... definitely an emotional event--more so than an intellectual one. | To be responsible for producing a child can be a thrill, something far more than thinking can achieve. |
| The first sight of my son was one of total involvement, total excitement, and awe. I just stared and smiled and looked for a long time and it brought a lot of reality to the forefront. It made a lot of things a little more meaningful. | A child's birth can bring a sense of wholeness and integration with the world, a sense of awe and excitement. A new child inspires one to stare and smile. It brings a sense of reality to prominence and gives meaning to mundane things. |
| Meaningful in what way? | |
| In a very real sense, something of myself had been extended, and resulted in something brand new, something special. I suppose a feeling of great humility in having a part in such a process that is really a mysterious one--the whole meaning of life, regeneration .... | To participate in producing a child engages one in the activity of Creation--the making of something totally new. It's a humbling, mysterious experience that seems to link one with life's essential meaning. |
| The first time I saw him was just hours after being born. I was trying so hard to empathize with this creature that was a human being and had a mind and a soul, and was sit- | There is a desire to reach out and touch the newborn, to communicate with it, to show |

> ting there oblivious to me and to most things.

> I had this incredible desire to reach out with my being to it--not just touch it, but to reach it. It was a real desire to communicate, and to show my warmth toward him, my acceptance. Also a desire for communication from him--a reaction, a response.

it warmth and acceptance, even though it seems oblivious to the world around it. One reaches out to the newborn to gain a reaction from it, to receive a sign of contact with that from which a child springs.

John describes himself as "a very affectionate person, physically and verbally", and had always "expected" it in return. But his wife is "totally the opposite. It's totally foreign to her."

> So those kinds of things started to fall into play in what I had to consider--not just the life of a child to raise, to cherish, but whether, in fact, I would be in an environment where I could succeed in seeing a child reared in the way I felt was necessary.

To love a child means to desire to provide an environment in which it can be raised in ways deemed successful. One wants to protect it from negative influences.

Even after the marriage and subsequent arrival of the child, John was "afraid."

> I was very afraid that what I had to contribute to the nourishing of a child could possibly be nullified by something in the other negative direction. An environment such as my wife experienced is one in which I don't feel I would like a child raised. (Sheila's parents had been divorced. Her mother remarried.)

Love contains a fear of its own nullification, of its being overcome by what is perceived to be its antithesis.

From John's point of view, as it

turned out, his fears were justified, because, with the first child at least, "there were not consistent kinds of attitudes between my wife and myself in terms of our behaviour toward the child."

Sometimes the fears are realized.

Love of a child can create conflicts between parents.

Is that something he and Sheila still have to work on? "Yes, always." Fortunately, there has been some improvement of late with Brian's "adjustment" in gaining "control of his own senses", etc.

But a child can adjust to parental conflict by gaining control of itself. This in turn can bring parents closer together.

How does John feel in relation to Brian now? "I feel very close to him, and very supportive." The matter of affection had

> got to the point where my wife was incapable of truly warm expressions of affection toward my son. That's the way it was for a long time. I think that's on the improvement trend, but as a result of that, sometimes I found it hard (although I had been doing it all along); i.e., showing affection, but he often found it difficult to accept it, because of the discomfort he has with my wife.

A living relationship to a child is on-going, never static, never ending. As a result, the bad times can grow into good times. A child's vitality, adaptability, can provide ground for adult hopefulness.

> They don't have a very comfortable physical interaction and I could sense that quite a lot, and could feel (in my own son) a tenseness that was there. And it was the same kind of tenseness I could feel about my wife.

Even though one might claim a child as one's own, it always also bears reflection of its other parent.

As a consequence, John has seen himself as being something of a "mediator" between his wife and the child. Lately though, Brian has become much more comfortable in showing affection. John spoke with obvious delight of the day recently when he dropped Brian off at school and the child "came up and wanted a kiss and hug good-bye. It's one of the signs that is pleasing me."

Very gratifying to a parent are signs from a child that it wants the very thing the parent holds in value.

These considerations, such as his wife's difficulties in freely accepting the child, and his new perceptions of his potential in-laws and wife's background, all "in an unfortunate and great respect, overshadowed (his) real reactions to a conception of a child and the inevitability of a child being born."

Some adult circumstances powerfully work to overshadow the true significance of a child's birth.

Yet too, the arrival of Brian has brought with it some good experiences. Witnessing the birth, an event "in which I have been a factor--a direct factor--had a very special meaning for me. Sort of, part of a miracle. And it made me think of my own purpose here--my own future."

To witness a child's birth brings a sense of being part of a miracle, and it makes one think of one's own purposes--present and future.

How did the arrival of the child transform John's sense of purpose and future?

> Well, I think it brought home the fact that I was now a parent and was now to be looking at the world in slightly different terms. A responsibility, obviously, was involved, which had never been before --much greater than had been before. So I think...it demanded more of an attitude of maturity from me, certainly a different dimension of maturity.

Having a child brings a new maturity to adults or at least a different form of maturity.

The arrival of the second child, Ellen, was "not an intentional child" either, but her conception "was not being deliberately prevented." According to John,

What are the differences between an intentional child and an unintentional one?

> the event (of the birth) was a happy one, and one which we both anticipated with great pleasure. And naturally, having had a son first, we sort of hoped we'd have a daughter, and we had discussed our family life and future, and were sort of comfortable with the thought of having children; so that this fit in just nicely.

To deliberately not prevent a child's conception makes possible happier circumstances for the arrival. It opens up dialogue about family and future, so that the child will have a genuine place to "fit in."

As far as Sheila was concerned, her

> expectations were that she would be able to do everything right this time. Everyone makes mistakes, but she felt very strongly that this would be a chance to work things out for the best. And by the time this child was coming along, our relationship ... was one in which we communicated better, so that all

A second child provides an opportunity to redeem mistakes made with the first one, to learn from those mistakes.

A good environment for a child's com-

> round, the whole environment was better, and I was like a kid, very much looking forward to it.
>
> Also, I was spending a great deal of time with my son in talking about it and explaining what was to come ... So I was right in the thick of things with it.

For John, the birth of Ellen has brought him and Sheila "closer together."

ing brings out different aspects of parents than a bad one. It reduces a parent to feeling like a child again; a sense of being immersed in the "thick" of things.

When a child's birth is welcomed, parents can be brought closer together.

### (iv) Louise Kinderloss: A married mother with one child

Louise is in her late twenties and the mother of two-year-old Blair. Wally, her husband, is a building contractor. They live in a suburban bungalow on the outskirts of a large city. When Louise speaks, the brightness of her personality shines through the quiet animation in her voice. Her eyes also give away her sense of fun. For her, life seems a relatively uncomplicated affair. She used to work as a secretary before marriage, but now is content to be a wife and mother. Her house is always clean and tidy, simply decorated, with veneer furniture, plants, and pictures of herself and Wally. A picture of Blair also adorns the television set.

When I asked Louise what hopes and dreams she has for Blair, she replied, "to be a football player or a hockey player and make lots of money." She and Wally attend all the home games of the local professional hockey team; "They make so much money it's incredible. I mean, some day our son is going to make lots of money." So what happens if he wants to be a ballet dancer?

A parent has hopes for a child.

The hopes can be defined and shaped by parental estimates of what is important.

> That's fine. I suppose I just have this at the back of my mind what I'd like him to be, but if he isn't, fine. It's his life. I'm not pushing him into anything he doesn't want to do. Even a ballet dancer can make lots of money.

The perceived value and power of money.

Toward the end of the conversation I asked Louise to try to put into words, on the basis of her experience, what she thinks a child is.

> I think the first thing that comes into my mind is 'an extension of my life'. You know, an individual. Gosh, I don't know ... I suppose, well, I'm not going to live forever and my child has a lot of qualities in him that he'll carry on through generations. And at least I know there's someone to carry on part of me. My life just doesn't come to an end, it's carried on through someone else. I think I'm really lucky, to carry on.

A child extends a parent's personal sense of life.
A child carries a parent's own qualities through generations. As a parent, part of oneself is carried on--it doesn't just end. Such a fact can give one a sense of good fortune.

Yet she also feels Blair is very much his own person.

> You have given him life to make his own choices. To do what he wants to do. But you also know that he's carrying your characteristics, but to his own limit.

A child is a part of a parent, but also apart from it. A child carries a parent's characteristics to its own limit.

Blair had been a 'premie', born at six and a half months. He had a heart operation when he was just a month old. He was slow in learning to walk, "and all the other aspects. They say he's three months younger than his actual age. But he's up to par with all the others (now) with building blocks, intelligence-wise. He's up to par with his age."

Adults measure a child's progress by comparing the child to others.

Some of the things Louise enjoys doing with Blair include going to the shopping plaza ("I like taking him there because he can walk around and I don't have to carry him. And we can sit down and eat a meal.") Or she likes going to the park together. "He goes on the slide and he goes on the swing and he's just becoming more independent. And I think I like that."

A child's independence deepens the possibilities of sharing a life with it.

Louise often experiences feelings

A child brings a

of great pride.

> Everything that he accomplishes--a new word, or eats something different--it's always a great pride, everytime he does something. He's really now doing cute things. He's putting his own boots on, his hat on.

She says he's becoming "an individual ... and I like that."

Yet too, Blair "plays up on" Louise.

> He plays up on me with his temper. If he wants something, and I say 'No!', he screams and hollers, and he'll try to make me give in. Oh, lots of times.
>
> He runs me a lot. He rules me. I suppose that's my fault, because I think to myself that I was lucky that I had him. So I baby him more than I should. I let him get away with a lot.
>
> When he's talking and he'll point to something, and I'll know what he's saying so he doesn't have to say it, 'cause I know what he wants, and I'll get up and get it for him instead of letting him get it.
>
> Say he wants a cookie: he just has to point and I've up and got it. Which is wrong. I know it's wrong but I can't stop myself sometimes.

Wally, Louise's husband, tells her all the time "if he whines to have his chair moved, let him do it himself. He

sense of pride to a parent, especially when new things are accomplished. The cuteness of children is in seeing them work at the manners of the adult world.

A child's achievement of independence brings pleasure.

Living with a child can mean a battle of wills. Often a parent gives in, then feels the child is ruling that parent.

A parent's sense of fortune in having a child can allow a child to "get away" with things.

Knowing what a child wants does not require formal language.

It is often difficult to stop oneself 'giving' to a child, even when one knows this may be wrong.

can do it."

Louise feels that much of the time she has an intuitive understanding of what Blair is thinking. "I know exactly what he wants, what he's thinking." Is it a kind of bond that exists between them?

A mother understands her child symbiotically.

> I don't know. I suppose it is a bond but then it's also a handicap, because I'm not letting him grow, I'm not letting him do things himself. I'm actually stopping him from learning.

An intellectual appreciation of good parenting does not preclude doing what comes instinctively in living with a child.

Her sense of understanding, she feels, is deeper than her husband's. "Maybe his (Blair's) father feels left out because he doesn't understand him as much as I do."

A mother's understanding of a child may be more intimate than a father's.

Both Louise and Wally find Blair is much more "fun" at his present age than when he was a baby. "He's at the age where (we) can do things." Wally likes to take Blair out skating. According to Louise, he "didn't want the baby--the cuddly thing. He wanted the older type, and he's got that now."

The enjoyment of children comes particularly when adults and children can do things together, when children assume an independence and strength

There was a time when Louise felt

she could have "thrown (Blair) out the window."

> Oh, he was terrible ... whining constantly. He had to be fed every two hours. Then we stopped feeding him, we had to burp him for about an hour, then get about fifteen minutes sleep. He never slept through the night till he was over a year and a half old.

Children can make enormous demands on parents, and interrupt their lives. Parents sacrifice their own needs to the needs of the child. At times this can produce resentment of a child.

Louise looks forward to having more children. "I'd like to have ten .... But I'd like to have them older--just have them born, then jump to about age four, would be just fine."

Babies are very different than young children.

Louise left her home in Toronto at age twenty-one to live out West. She didn't like being surrounded by relatives "every time I turned around." Before having Blair, she describes herself as "always the party type of person." She didn't "really, really grow up until I had Blair."

Every parent was a child once. Even as an adult, independence from family can be important.

A child helps an adult to grow up.

What did she mean by 'growing up'?

> Having a sense of worth, I suppose. Being a responsible citizen .... I suppose, even when I got married, it was fun and games. I never hit reality. And then when you have a baby, it really hits you. My roommate and I used to go out to part-

Having a baby means confronting reality.

> ies and really enjoy ourselves. But now it's a bit more complicated to go .... Maybe I should have had kids years ago. Then I'd have settled down. (Yet) I was ready when I had Blair. I was ready. I was finished with parties, going out all the time. I was ready to settle down. I knew I wanted to settle down.

Children make adult life more complicated, but at the same time more settled. For this to be possible, though, one needs to be ready for it, to want it.

Are you more happy with a boy or a girl?

> I suppose with Wally, he's happy Blair's a boy. I'd always wanted a little girl, and I had a girl so I can't complain.

Why did Louise want a girl?

> I suppose that every woman dreams of having a girl and that the man is always wanting a son to carry on the family, and I think a woman always wants a daughter to have a wedding for.

Children can be seen as serving to fulfill traditional values.

The most traumatic event in the life of Louise and Wally was the death of their first child, a prematurely born baby girl who died several days after birth. Born at two pounds, nine ounces, "she was perfect, except her lungs were deformed The medical team tried to keep her alive with respirators, and other techniques, but "nothing would work X-rays revealed a massive blood clot on the baby's brain, "there was nothing left of her brain. So they asked us if we wanted to .... I've always felt that was the toughest decision I'd ever have to make. But I don't regret my decision."

It is difficult to speak of having to decide to end a child's life.

What was involved for her (and Wally) in the decision?

> Well, we both had discussed it, and they had asked, as soon as she was taken to hospital, to have her baptized. But we refused, saying there was no way we were going to have her baptized, because I suppose we just kept hoping and hoping.

Agreeing to baptize a dying child, would mean to acknowledge its dying--to give up hope for it. To refuse baptism may mean holding on to hope.

Every time the phone rang, "we were just so afraid to answer it, for fear it would be bad news. So we were both praying the whole time, but ....

The fear of, and avoidance of, bad news.

To pray is to appeal primordially.

> It was a very empty feeling but it never hit me psychologically, because I'd never had her home, to, you know, put her into bed and to feed her and to hold her. I mean I'd go and see her every day in the hospital, but I didn't want to touch her, although I did the last day. That was tough. That was the toughest. Then they told us that there was no hope, actually no hope. They asked me if I wanted to hold her, just at the last. They were going to disconnect her. I finally did. I felt I had to. And then we left and came home and about half an hour later they told us. But the doctor said, if they disconnected it, because her will is stronger to live, then that was meant to be.

A bond with a child is established through touch--holding, feeding, putting to bed, etc. It is extremely difficult to touch, establish a bond with, that which holds little hope.

There is a need to come to terms with a child's death.

Then we made all the funeral arrangements. And we had her baptized--at the very last minute--and the minister from the hospital came to baptize her. Once we knew there was no hope, then we decided to baptize her. But up until then, we just refused. I suppose we refused the reality of it really happening. And then when they said there was no hope, we felt we'd have to baptize her.

To live with a child is to live with the reality of hope.

You know, my first reaction was, when they said there was no hope and they asked us again if we wanted her baptized and we said, "no." And then we went to the car, we discussed it, and we decided it would be right to have her baptized.

Baptism means acceding to a hope beyond hope.

How did her husband manage through this?

Well, he held up better than I did. When I gave birth, he was told right off the bat that there was actually no hope. He kept this to himself. Then when she died, he made all the arrangements. You know, bought her a gown. But when we discussed it, he really broke down. It brought us closer together.

The death of a child can bring parents closer together, in a strength that emerges from their vulnerability.

### (v) Warren and Ardelle Parley: A married couple with two children

Warren and Ardelle, both in their mid-thirties, have been married for ten years, and are the parents of Alan (six years old) and Carl (three years). Warren is a graduate student and Ardelle a former Day-Care consultant now fully assuming the roles of wife and mother. Both partners display their intense involvement in their parenting through the enormous vigour and emphatic quality of their speech. Every issue which emerged in the course of our conversation elicited impassioned engagement. Interestingly enough, however, even though each had strong views on any topic raised, their views, particularly concerning their children, never seemed to be at cross-purposes. They spoke on occasion of the fiery nature of their early years together, but in our conversations, the impression given was of two people who had developed a deep understanding and appreciation of each other's existentiality.

The interview opens with both parents remarking on how "fascinating" it is to have produced two children within the same family who, at the same time, are two "totally different persons." For them, this has brought the assessment that each child has his own personality apart from the influences and shaping of the parental environment. It also re-

No two children are the same.

Environment is only partly responsible for the differences.

minds them that "there are persons here (in the family) we don't know everything about .... Even though one is just six tomorrow, we still feel like they're three quarters unknown to us." Ardelle has found that each child has "hidden characteristics ... that one day weren't there and the next day they pop out. Things that you didn't expect from your kids." Warren says these are things they "wouldn't get within the house", (or) "the kinds of things that we do." Nor do they, as parents, "believe (the children) are getting them from outside. We can see a kind of uniqueness (in each one) in terms of how he's changing."

A child remains partly unknown to those who live with it.

Children display hidden characteristics one doesn't expect.

Each child displays a uniqueness.

This sense of "unknowing" they believe is partially related to their great geographical distance from their own immediate families. Also, the children being, in a certain sense, "complete strangers" causes the parents to reflect on the needs and motives of the children in day-to-day occurrences. For example, when a child goes to the refrigerator three times in an hour, they find themselves wondering,

The child lives in a home as a stranger, in some ways.

> Is it because he's hungry--and we've fed him properly--or is he looking for attention from us, or is the temperature too hot in his room and he needs a cold drink, or did my grandmother walk on a snake?

Parental desire to explain children's actions may reflect a desire to know children's needs in order to satisfy them.

As a young mother, Ardelle wasn't prepared for this sense of a child's differentness from her. She feels herself to have been influenced too much by the literature on mother-child "bonding." After two children, she suggests, "that's part of the rubbish." Yet,

A child remains as Other.

The formal medical literature doesn't grant enough to the experience of a child's otherness.

> You have a caring of this infant that's put into your arms. This child was born. It grew inside you for nine months but you look down at it, and you really don't know that baby.

The flesh and blood intimacy between mother and child doesn't preclude this experience of a child's otherness.

At the same time, though, she felt "protective toward it", and realized that "I grew up with the baby and the baby grew with me." She "can think of warmer moments (she has) with them now because they can express themselves back to you." For her, it takes a bit of "clear thinking" shortly after giving birth "before you can come to your own acceptance of youself and your child together." The television diaper advertisements, with a

Neither does the otherness undermine the desire to protect a child. The experience of having a child is gained by growing with it, and especially as the chid reciprocates.

To accept oneself and one's child can involve a rationality, particularly to come to acknowledge one's own experience against popular stereotypes.

"radiant mother sitting in bed grinning, and this newborn in her arms" is misleading. "After you've gone through labour and your hair is stuck to your head and you're exhausted, you know you don't look like that!"

Children can bring adults to reflect on their own childhood.

Both Warren and Ardelle find the experience of having their own children makes them reflect on their own families, their own training and upbringing, etc. Ardelle's mother died when she was fourteen and her father was in his sixties when she was a teenager. Also, all her siblings were much older than herself. She's hoping that she'll be "a very tolerant mother when (her) kids become teenagers, for the lack of the things that she lost." She feels that as parents they have already started that with their boys, through, for example, having an openness about sex", "feelings", and "expressions of love." She also wants to put a lot of emphasis on having a strong family life, fostered by taking "family holidays."

A parent sometimes defines parenting practices in a direct distinction from those experienced as a child.

For example, a parent who never had a strong family life emphasizes it.

I just want to maintain a family

> unit, and if they grow and expand that's fine. I want them to do that, but I still want them to maintain the closeness of the family.

Even now she can see herself as a very happy grandmother.

> I like to be able to visualize that far ahead, that we will ... start all over again, and we'll produce a family unit that will give my children and their children the strong bonding that I would have liked.

Parents project into the future on basis of present life with children.

Sometimes parents yearn for a bonding felt to have been lost.

As a child, both her grandparents were dead, and she felt there was "nobody to cling to." Those are some of the reasons she would like to see extensions of her present family.

Warren would describe them both as "idealists" in terms of their parenting. "We both believe in ... an ideal family, that there is such a thing as a proper way to raise kids, a proper way to relate to each other, to them." By this he doesn't mean proper in terms of being "socially acceptable", or in terms of "social morality", but rather

An ideal way of relating to children is sensed to exist.

> proper in terms of ... some natural kind of relationship, something

There is a deep sense of appropri-

> which spiritually, biologically, organically, is appropriate, right, and works. And that all of the persons involved in that relationship get the best from the relationship.

ateness which occurs when parenting practices seem to work. It is the sense that all concerned are gaining from the relationship.

In saying these things, he acknowledges certain developments in relations between himself and his parents. "I had extremely good relationships with my parents until I was twelve, and extremely poor from there on." By his own account, he was raised in "a very, very tight religious upbringing. Up until twelve I would have died for the faith ... and after twelve I would have died to prevent it." He ran away from home at sixteen. It is on the basis of both of their own experiences as children, then, that they feel "there is a better way" to parent.

Parental dogmatism can lead to broken relations with a child.

A child runs away from something to a faith in something else, a better way.

Working things out between partners precedes the desire for children. Children need the space of concord between parents.

Part of that "better way" for them has been to have had four years prior to the birth of their own children in which to "work things out" between themselves, "before someone else comes along" that "you have to work things out with too." It was after four years of "relating" to each other, says Ardelle, that they "decided to turn ourselves into three."

Having a child turns two people into three. The birth of a child also marks the birth of the parents as parents.

Warren describes this as a "metamorphosis." "We became three, we didn't stop being two, we just became three." And now "We're six (years old)."

Both agree that the sense of novelty that came to them with Alan's birth is still with them. Warren describes the feelings as "whooping wonderment"--that not only do they have two children now, but they "work!"

Children bring a sense of novelty, of newness, of wonder, particularly as they manifest life itself in progress.

> I mean, it's sort of like a new machine, it's like a typewriter. I don't mean to be totally cold .. but we're still surprised when the teeth come out in the same way they're supposed to, (and) both eyes still work .... It's still marvelous, it's still great. They stand up and they can walk one foot in front of the other. I mean, that sounds incredibly simple but we're still amazed at the mechanics of that .... I know that sound terribly cold ....

The marvel of children's biological agenda. It brings 'home' life itself.

This leads Warren to say,

> There are things that have to do with the birth of the child that were beyond me, which were beyond your choice, and that it's a marvel of the ingenuity of the person. We can sit completely awestruck by the way our kids behave as other people, as other beings .... I guess it's the independence from you ... that becomes part of the awe.

The marvel of a child is the inauguration of something from beyond oneself, yet which at the same time issues from oneself.

In trying to express these things, Warren admits to becoming "confused", and to having difficulty "comprehending." Ardelle says she finds it "just very pleasing." She "very much enjoys both of (her) children", and "likes to watch them grow." She particularly enjoys it "when they make new strides, and reach out (with) some of the values you've given them."

Awe as confusing, incomprehensible, but also very pleasing, something to be enjoyed.

Observing children as observing the growth of life emergent.

> If you just happen to be walking up behind your child and he's in the sandbox, and he interacts between two younger ones that are fighting, and he mediates the dispute, and does it very nicely, my that's rewarding ... it's really rewarding to see that ... to know that he is a person who's thinking and thinking out situations.

The satisfaction of seeing one's own values at work in one's children.

She also stresses that that's not "predictable. You can't know that your child would do that", yet "it's very pleasing to see these things happening."

The satisfaction comes from the unpredictability of it occurring.

We explore further their understanding of "right parenting" and what is "good." Warren says that as parents they "operate very definitely from the point of view that there is a kind of good that we can recognize ...because you

The Good experienced as recognizable. There's a feeling that it's right.

feel it's right." For him though, one can never really be sure where the sense of "rightness" comes from, whether it comes from "your own upbringing", from "solid demands", or from "the fact that as you do these kinds of things, the kids read in what you think is an appropriate one." Nevertheless, there is a

Where the sense of the Good and the Right originates is uncertain.

Perhaps it lies in the way children respond to it.

> very definite sense of ... a definite kind of right.... It's not necessarily wrong if it's not done in that way, but it's a definite right sometimes, that you get from a situation. You know when you've done some things well....

The sense of 'right' in relations with children is definite, sure, although the sense of wrong is not experienced as that.

For Warren this is very much tied in with his own upbringing and particularly his relationship with his father, who, by his own account, "was an extremely good father ..., (but) an extremely narrow-thinking man in some respects." He and his father "never once had a conversation." Ardelle describes him (Warren's father) as "a strong disciplinarian." Warren hopes he can "escape that kind of narrowness in thinking" with his own children. Yet "you never really escape it" even though "it's a very natural inclination to try to escape it.... You tend to work with your kids hoping that you're

For a child, a strong disciplinarian is experienced as narrow. For an adult, it is impossible to escape the influences of one's own childhood, even though one may hope and try to.

not doing something simply as a reaction against what your father did to you."

Both Warren and Ardelle have "chosen to be concerned about this issue" of reproducing learned parenting behaviour, and what has "surprised" them is that it's a concern that "grows more than diminishes as time goes on." For Warren, it had brought an awareness that "some days I'm very definitely my father", and some days I'm very definitely not my father."

As a parent one can choose to be concerned about reproducing, with one's own children, learned parenting practices. It's a concern that increases rather than diminishes. Sometimes a man reproduces his own father, at other times he doesn't.

> And on the days that I'm most myself, those are the days that I feel most capable of being a good father to my children. Those times I'm either reacting directly against my father or times I'm replicating the situation ... those are the least comfortable, the most negative kinds of times. The funny thing is, those are the easiest times.

Yet he acknowledged that "even though I totally disagreed then and still disagree now with some of his (father's) tactics", he (the father) was always doing it from his sense of what was right."

The times when he does not are those when the sense of the Good prevails. Reaction to or replication of parental models usually produce negative results with one's own chldren. But such courses are usually the easiest.
An adult 'child' acknowledges his parents tried to act from the sense of Right.

In the early years of their parenting, particularly with the first child, "when the whole thing was still somewhat new, you were really required to think fresh constantly, about everything you did"; for example, "Why did we do this? How do we do this? What are the consequences of doing this?" But as the years "progress",

> I think we resort more to our instinctive things, some of which are very definitely a part of our upbringing. And in that sense I think there's a little less of a certainty, of a surety, sometimes.

So,

> even though it sounds contradictory, the more I act instinctively, the more unsure I am about it, whereas if I'm thinking about what I'm doing, I can sort of say, "Well, this is the best course, and I'm willing to take the consequences of the course I choose."

Learning one's own sense of "right" parenting, as opposed to reproducing, is what makes it "so hard to be a caring parent...it's very, very hard." But "the rewards are more than adequate." As Warren expresses it,

> I really don't think there was ever a couple in all of history--you know, and I mean this--who were happier with the birth and with the

When a child first arrives, parents themselves have to begin their own lives again, so to speak. They are born again themselves, and are required to "think fresh."

With the passing of time, parenting becomes more instinctive, but this also brings, curiously enough, an uncertainty, because instinct represents a lapse of reflection, a lapse of thinking. Thinking reflects a willingness to participate in the consequences of one's own choices.

Learning right parenting in these senses is what makes being a caring parent so difficult.

The rewards of rising to the challenges of parenting, however, are great.
There is a feeling that no one could be happier.

> early years of the kids than we've been. (Although) at times now I might allow that to be requestioned.

The requestioning has had to do with the stresses and strains of the past year of their family life, which has involved uprooting themselves from their previous home in order to move to the university centre. The event has caused them to violate one of their own cardinal intentions as parents, which is always to "reason with (the children) on most matters", as Ardell puts it. "From the beginning ... once (the children) were old enough to understand, we've always talked to (them), we've always tried to make (them) understand." As a consequence, Alan, for example, is "a child who really does."

Physical uprooting can cause one's ideals as a parent to be violated.

One of the strains of transience is the eclipse of reasoning with children. Adult transience violates the natural tempo of a child's emerging understanding of the world.

They feel that the "power of reasoning" is so important, and is a quality they have "definitely worked on together", because when a child is

> out there in the real world, if he doesn't have the power of reasoning and the power of understanding, he'll walk into many situations which he shouldn't be in.

Reasoning as a form of faith.

> But by taking the time and explaining, it really works.

By "really works" Ardelle means, having the ability to mediate disputes, for example, and react "objectively" when things go wrong and "reason it out." It is these qualities shown in a child that give you "feedback" as a parent, and assure you "you're obviously doing the right thing. The kid's not a neurotic little twit in the corner, you know. So we can't be doing all that bad."

The belief that if a child can reason, can mediate, etc., then he seems to be able to live.

Their younger child, Carl, is more aggressive than Alan. Carl was less than two years old when the family moved to their present location, and both Warren and Ardelle feel Carl's aggressiveness "may stem from those times we either didn't want to give the time or we just felt that we were too pressured to sit down and use the reasoning power."

A child's aggressiveness may stem from not having been shown another way, the way of reason.

As parents, one of the most "disturbing" consequences of their recent move has been the growing consciousness of "the fact that we no longer control the factors that surround the raising of

A sense of parental loss of control over influences on a child can be disturbing.

our kids ... the total environment. There are many things external to us that we have no say in, that bring about very definite changes in our kids." Even though they were always aware of this eventually happening, "it's not until some of these changes start to come through that it really strikes home." As Warren expresses it,

> whether fate puts you next door with a family in which the child may be very aggressive or some other kind of characteristic that your kid can pick up, (or) things happen in the classroom with the teacher that will change his outlook on everything from racial issues through to other things ... that we really can't control any more.

Neighbourhood and classroom become two of the most important domains of influence on a child over which parents fear loss of control.

Generally, Warren and Ardelle think that this loss of control is "really a healthy good thing"; that is, "that he's getting somebody outside of just our very confining family." But it still "becomes a new thing to deal with", and

Dealing with loss of control becomes a new way through which children change parents.

> you then sort of have to sit yourself down again and say, 'Gee, what are the kinds of things we should be giving our kids?' Certainly it's not just a bunch of answers, because the answers don't always fit the questions that are coming out. But probably the best thing we can

For a parent, reflection about parenting never ceases.

> give them is a sense of reasoning, so that when they come across their own situation, they will have some tools to work with--that they can fall back on ... experiences with the family, and say, 'This is a new situation to me, but let's take this kind of approach to it, at least that's the way I've been raised.'

Often one appeals to the ways of one's own upbringing.

For Ardelle, "one of the best bases you could have for a family relationship is open communication."

> Because once the door is closed, you'll never know what is going on in your kid's head. And even at six and three, I think you need to know what's inside there. Not that you're prying. But you can help them before they might stumble on the path.

Without open communication a door closes between a parent and a child. Parenting as pedagogy, as a showing of the path.

Even so, Ardelle, thinks that "sometimes they should fall flat on their faces for experience's sake."

Experience comes through negativity, suffering, pain.

As far as an overall sense of parenting is concerned, Warren does not like to use the word "role", such as in "playing the role of parent" or "the changing role of parents." Rather, for him, "it's more (a question of) doing the best you can with what you've got." They both refuse to talk baby-talk with their children, but "very, very defin-

Parenting isn't simply an objective role that one just assumes.

itely speak to (the children) as if *we* were human beings." They noticed when Alan was a baby, how, when lying in his crib, "he would look directly into our eyes and he would react to bubbles in your mouth, and everything, and he would do it right back."

Rather it is a speaking between human beings, young and old.

Genuine communication occurs even between adults and very young babies.

This awareness of children's imitative power brought Warren to the conclusion that

> what I'd like to be doing is not simply operating from the needs he (Alan) has now, but to try to anticipate the needs of ten, fifteen years from now. I've got to be conscious of a lot more in the future from his past than just present needs.

A parent is concerned not just with a child's present life, but also its future.

As a father, Warren feels that

> if I'm lucky enough to hang in for eighty more years, I think I will finally probably have reached a stage where I'll know what I should have been doing when I was twenty.

Perhaps knowing how to parent is only achieved when it's more or less completed. Importance of wisdom of grandparents?

As a mother of two boys, Ardelle is particularly concerned about the adolescent stage of her boys' sexuality. Because she feels a "responsibility to somebody else's daughter", she will make a special effort to teach the boys to be responsible.

A responsible parent wants responsible children.

> And I don't think a mad fling at a beach party is making yourself a responsible father, if that's what you turn into, nine months down the road.

Sexuality is a particularly sensitive issue for a mother of two boys.

On these ethical questions, and how they might deal with them, both Warren and Ardelle think

> the truth is that no matter how many times we talk or think about it, ... the main conclusion you come to is that 'I don't know." You just don't know, either how you're going to react, or what to expect, or even what your values really are ....

In the end, parents often feel ignorant when it comes to parenting.

They hope though that "if (a person) is genuinely concerned and caring about others, (he) will carry that kind of concern into whatever kind of relationship he may find himself in."

But a basic hope is to teach children to care for others.

What changes have taken place in Warren and Ardelle as a result of having children? "Hell, the whole world becomes a different kind of place .... We're quite a bit different in terms of the kinds of things we do now." With the children small, they don't "even go out anywhere and leave our kid with a babysitter." This is partly because they've always lived away from grandparents who

Having children makes the whole world different for adults.

It limits adults' mobility, especially when it is difficult to find others who can be trusted to care for one's children.

could babysit. They would only leave their children with someone they "trust" "more than just a sixteen-year-old girl taking care of your two-month-old baby."

Parenting involves giving up things, sacrifices, a changing of priorities.

Recently they have become aware of "how much we've had to give up", in terms of time, for example, for the children. They realize how their priorities shifted more towards "incomes, jobs, looking for a little stability." But "there have never been any bad feelings" about giving up some of their own interests. As Ardelle put it, "we've never resented the kids taking away-- they never took away."

They have made a decision to restrict the size of their family. In Ardelle's words,

> If, at this point, we were getting into another baby and a couple of years down the road more babies, and going on and on, that would be it .... All our own inner feelings of the extra things you wanted to strive for would be just lost .... Small children take a lot of work.

Raising children takes a lot of work. That's one reason a small family is preferable.

Now that the children are a bit older, and "Warren's not having to share his load of pushing the buggie up the path because the kid's screaming",

> you can feel yourself getting beyond that and the older the children get, they'll be off on their own pursuits, and we can go off on ours. And it'll turn us more back into Ardelle and Warren, instead of Mommy and Daddy Parley.

When children go off on their own, parents revert back to the way they were before the children came.

Warren agrees that as the kids get older "we could once again become more of an individual." Ardelle feels that "our children will respect us as they get older and they see that we're not just parents, that we're individuals", with personal interests in which the children can't be included.

The reversion to individuality enables children to see their parents as individuals.

Warren suggests that neither of them would want a situation where "we live for our kids." For Ardelle, what will "make us a nice family" is that "we'll be four separate persons living together."

The belief that no parent should live for children alone. Rather a family means separate persons living together.

### (vi) Mrs. Duquesne: A retired widow with two adult children living away (transcript in Appendix B)

Mrs. Duquesne is eighty-two years of age and lives in a residence for senior citizens. Adorning various spaces in her small suite are pictures of her two children; a married daughter, fifty-one years old, and a divorced son, forty-eight. There are also numerous pictures of grandchildren.

Three things stood out concerning Mrs. Duquesne. One was the way in which her small apartment was absolutely filled with "things", including pieces of furniture from her previous home, knick-knacks of all descriptions, plants, samples of her own sculpting, weaving and other crafts, photographs, paintings, etc. There was scarcely an inch of open space in the room. In a sense, the whole history of her life was displayed through those "things", for every one of them told a story, every one bore a point of significance from the past into the present.

A second feature was Mrs. Duquesne's enormous personal courage and strength. She was in constant pain with a badly-set broken hip; her husband had died several years previously; her daughter lived in a distant city; and her son had just gone through a difficult divorce. But through all of our conversations she made frequent reference to the need not to complain, to "count one's blessings", and to live in trust.

Thirdly, Mrs. Duquesne often wondered aloud why anyone would be interested in listening to her talk of her experiences. She understood herself to be a simple, ordinary person of no special qualities, and found it difficult to believe that her remarks could bear any significance.

She described her biggest problem as being that of adapting herself to the "trauma" of losing her husband after fifty years "together", and then falling and breaking her leg. This meant she could no longer be self-sufficient, and as a consequence had to give up her apartment and move back to the province where her children lived. She describes all this as a

The adjustments of aging--giving up things.

> tremendous adjustment ... because my children had to come out, dispose of my furniture, dispose of my home, and find me a little place where I can have a few things around me that I like.

Children take on parenting functions in relation to their parents. The importance of things around.

She describes her present situation as "very comfortable", but "after leaving a home, it's pokey. A house, a little nest you build, so to speak. Cosiness and comfort and support and encouragement. Oh, a home means so much!"

The true meaning of a home comes through its comfort and support.

In spite of her setbacks, Mrs. Duquesne says she is a "contented woman." As a wife and mother "nothing ever held me back from fulfilling my potential. I stayed home." She has little sympathy for "this Women's Lib business. I think it's terrible." She also thinks that women away from the home are responsible for "a lot of the things that are wrong" between parents and children.

Staying home as fulfilling one's potential.

A concern about the implications for children of a mother being away from home.

> It's the mother that makes this home, isn't it? Without a mother, it isn't really a home, is it? A man may look after his children but it's Mother you run to if you fall and hurt yourself. It's Mother you run to and ask for advice nine times out of ten .... Women, as mothers of the race, have a tremendous responsibility. There are too many women wanting careers instead of wanting to make homes and bring up their families.

A mother "makes" a home, more so than a father.

Women, as mothers of the race, carry a special responsibility.

She has difficulty understanding the "discontent" of many women today. She doesn't know what they want.

The discontent of women as difficult to understand.

> I don't know. I just don't know. Maybe they want something more than home life. But what's lovelier? What's lovelier than making a good meal, setting a nice table, having you husband and your children say, 'Oh, Mum, that's wonderful!' What could give you more pleasure than that? Who'd want to go out and eat at a café? I think that women are responsible for a lot of the things

The human sharing in a home as love-ly.

It makes one wonder if there could ever be a higher pleasure.

that have gone wrong with children.

While she says it's "funny to be mother to middle-aged children", she feels no different about them now than when they were little. As a young woman, she always "wanted" to have children. After marriage, she had to "wait" five years before her daughter was born, an event whereby she regards her "prayers (as being) answered." Her daughter means a "tremendous lot" to her.

Children as something wanted, and waited for, as an answer to prayer.

> And then a little son came along. And I shall never forget when I was in the hospital, sort of out of my semi-conscious state, I heard someone say, 'You have a son', and I said, 'Oh! How wonderful!' And he's been a good son to me. And so has my daughter been a good girl.

A child "comes along" on its own terms. It is not manipulated into being.
Having a child is wonderful.

What kinds of transformations has she (Mrs. Duquesne) undergone personally as a result of having raised two children?

> I don't quite know how to answer that because when it's something you've always wanted, and it happens, well, you're satisfied.

When children are wanted, and they come, satisfaction is the result, which requires no questioning.

A major concern to her as a mother, though, was the conviction that "I musn't fail my children. I've got a tremendous responsibility and I must just do the best I can." She admits, "we all make mistakes, because we're parents for the first time."

A child inspires a parent to do its best.

What mistakes does she feel she may have made? "It would be in little ways, perhaps, denying them something they wanted, maybe I thought they shouldn't have." She remembers her daughter's request to take figure skating, but at the time the family couldn't afford it, so "she had to be satisfied with speed-skating because the instruction wasn't so expensive." Those were the "hard years" of the Depression.

Circumstances often limit the implementation of one's ideals with children.

Did her children go through rebellious periods at all, say, when they were teenagers?

> No, I can't say they did, no. There wasn't any need to, because we were a happy family. Oh, my son sowed a few wild oats. I mean he had a friend I couldn't stand--but that's no sin, is it--that I think led him astray once in awhile. I don't know. We weren't too rigid.

Rebellion in children seen as a symptom of unhappiness.

Mrs. Duquesne feels she has never "resented" her children "growing up While she's wanted them to "grow up independent", it's "very hard to 'let go', and to decide where your parental authority should just be restrained. That's difficult." Because she'd "done a lot of reading, and writing, etc." she doesn't feel she ever had to make firm decisions about that. "I just had to gradually let them go."

The independence of children is a positive desire for a parent, but letting go of parental authority and control is difficult.

Did she have an idea as to what she wanted her children to be in later years? "I wanted them to grow up to be good children, good adults." In her view, "they've both turned out well." Her son is "getting along very nicely." Her daughter is "well-established."

The desire for the Good.

Goodness perceived as "getting along nicely" and being "well-established."

Mrs. Duquesne doesn't get to see her daughter very often, but was driven by her son to her daughter's for Christmas.

Significant occasions bring families together.

> It seemed so strange. All the silverware on the table, and all the good Royal Doulton china. Nearly everything that my daughter was using on the table at Christmas was mine at one time. So I go there and find part of my home there, and that's very nice.

Continuity of generations passed through things. The tie between a parent and a child is expressed through shared ownership of things. One's home lives through one's possessions.

She herself feels lucky to have had

the parents she did. "All my mother's people are artistic." Before they came to Canada as a young family, her father used to take the children once a week to a "concert, an art gallery, or a museum." These are interests she has maintained throughout her life.

Every parent is both a child and parent.
Who one's parents are is a matter of luck; i.e., there is no choice involved for a child.

### (vii) Bill and Alice Nesbitt: Parents of a mentally handicapped daughter and a normal teenager

The Nesbitt nuclear family consists of parents, Bill and Alice; Mary, a severely handicapped eighteen-year-old; and Robyn, a 'normal' adolescent of sixteen years. Both Bill and Alice exude a warmth and friendliness in their speech and conversation. Alice is the livelier of the two, with Bill being more quiet and reflective. As they speak of their life with Mary, their determination to make it as good a life as possible for all concerned shows through. This is reflected also in the adjustments they have been prepared to make in their physical arrangements. In the driveway to the house, for example, is a van fitted for wheelchair use. The van is used to transport Mary to her "special school" each day, a school the Nesbitts were instrumental in establishing. In the living room, pictures of both Robyn and Mary can be seen on one of the bookcases.

The Nesbitts spoke often of their struggles for public recognition of the rights of the handicapped; and their genuine love and care for Mary was displayed in their ability to discern and share her sense of humour. At times, however, too, their own fatigue from the heavy responsibility they have shouldered showed through. Bill often looked extremely tired, and on one occasion Mary spoke briefly of her personal bitterness about the seeming unfairness, compared to other parents, of having a severely retarded child.

Mary was a "post-term" baby by three and a half weeks. She was convulsive at birth because, the parents were told, of a certain lack of body chemicals. The doctor warned them that there may be complications. At six months, Mary showed signs of epilepsy. At nine months she was not holding her head independently. At eighteen months she developed cerebral palsy. All through this, though, "she seemed alert." "We got the blows progressively", Bill remarked.

Discerning the signs of trouble with a child.

Signs as a prefiguring, as omen.

The signs become blows.

Throughout Mary's life and presence in the family there has been a pre-occupation with health and drugs. She is presently drug-controlled all the time, primarily with phenobarbital, and the parents are grateful that "she hasn't had a seizure for three years." They spoke too though of their disappointment that after spending hundreds of hours with Mary getting her to walk she developed curvature of the spine. "Gosh, what else can go wrong?" said Alice about the discovery.

Living with a handicapped child, parental control is aided by, but perhaps also usurped by, medical control.

A handicapped child brings disappointment which springs from the ineffectiveness of parental efforts. Normal parenting practices are not enough.

I asked about the social implications of having Mary with them. They both remarked on how much their own activities have been curtailed.

The parents of a handicapped child feel handicapped too.

> As parents we've been babysitters for years, although it's getting easier now that she's controlled. In earlier years, one of the more difficult situations was in church. It was as if people were afraid, because they weren't sure what Mary was going to do or say next.

Public uncertainty about the handicapped emerges from fear.

Sometimes there are problems at campsites ("We all love to go camping.") Mary will wander into the bushes and fall, or else start playing in burnt-out

Human arrangements in the world display a lack of place for the handicapped.

fire pits. "We have tethered her, but she hates it, so now we can use it as a discipline measure." I asked if this means that she's aware when as parents they try to communicate with her.

> Oh, she's very aware. The difficulty is getting herself understood. As parents we feel a sort of intuitive understanding with her. But if she hits you with a word like 'car', for example, does she mean vehicle, card, toy car, etc.? But talking with her, she can make herself understood through our directive questions.

Parents intuitively understand even a handicapped child.

Understanding comes through questioning.

I remarked that as parents Bill and Alice seem to have come to terms with Mary.

> 'You have no choice', Alice replies. But sometimes she'll drive you mad. She has a very short temper. For behaviour management, sometimes I'll go hide in a room.
>
> She's thinking all the time--and she looks at you so knowingly. You get the feeling she's just behind a closed door. You keep waiting for someone to open the door.

Coming to terms with a handicapped child is not a matter of choice.

Normal parents have a sense of being known by their handicapped child, who seems to live just behind a closed door, waiting for someone to open it.

Friends and neighbours have been good. Mary is really well-behaved with them. "Much more so than she is with us." Grandparents dote on her and re-

A handicapped person too has a public and private self.

fuse to "take a stand with her." Some friends of Robyn "probably just tolerate" Mary, although "I've never been aware of any teasing", said Alice.

I ask both Bill and Alice if they could somehow sum up their experience of what it has been like living with Mary. Bill responded:

> Sometimes I feel we've been sort of cheated. We haven't been able to live as full a life as we might have. But we've come to accept Mary as a fact. The rest of us are facts. You accept the facts. But we have our down days. It's a matter of coming to terms with things. You've been given a niche in life and that's where you fit. But sometimes our neighbours go off skiing, and we think of things we wish we could do. Also there's the constant worry--what if something happens to us?

Alice expressed herself this way:

> I'm still at the stage of 'if only.' If only we had another doctor. If only she'd been caesarian, she would have been fine. We could have had another but we were afraid. even though it wasn't hereditary. Now it's too late.
>
> But we do have our blessings with Mary. She's more affectionate than most children. She doesn't hold grudges. She's been a joy to us as well as a heartache.

Having a handicapped child can bring a sense of being cheated, of being deprived of life's fullness. But a handicapped child has a facticity like all of us, which calls to be accepted. Discerning one's place in the world with a handicapped child: To have such a child is to set one as being different from others. It can be a source of great worry.
Wondering why things turned out the way they did. Having one handicapped child creates the fear of having another one.

A handicapped child does bring certain blessings --affection, joy-- but also an aching heart.

For both Bill and Alice, one of the

most "horrifying" questions has been "where does this child fit in society?" which for them is part of the same question "what is handicapped?" When Mary began to go through puberty, they made arrangements at the hospital to have her sterilized. When Mary was actually on the ward bed, waiting to be wheeled to the operating room, lawyers arrived on the scene, and asked them to leave with Mary immediately. "We were made to feel like criminals." By law in Canada, they were told, the 'rights of the handicapped' include the right to have children. "We were told 'she has a right to have a baby if she wants a baby'." Hospitals are afraid of being sued, so they comply with lawyers' wishes. All retarded and handicapped people are labelled as the same. "It seems a shame", remarked Bill. "Science saves children at birth, but the quality of life is still in question." Alice continued.

The question of where a handicapped child fits in the total scheme of things is still open.

The contradiction between objective Human Rights and the sense of what is right, humanly speaking.

Science can save a child's life, but it asks no question about the quality of the child's life it saves.

> We'll keep Mary at home as long as we can. But when she's 18 we have to go to court to prove that as guardians we're fit. And then we have to re-apply after every two years. It's demeaning and insult-

ing to us as parents. The whole system is unjust. There is so much public ignorance about the handicapped. Basically, I think it's based on fear. They're afraid because they're never sure what handicapped people are going to do next.

The handicapped elicit public fear, which sustains public ignorance.

### (viii) Eunice Dole; A mother judged parentally incompetent by a government social service agency

Eunice is a native woman in her late forties. She has borne eight children, but only one, Lawrence, the youngest, at age ten, is at home with her now. The rest have either been placed on a "ranch", or else are simply "not around". Eunice's own parents died when she was a small child, so she was raised by her sister. She has been on her own since the age of sixteen. Her husband left her many years ago. She and Lawrence live in a rented upstairs portion of a large old house.

Even though we had four one-hour visits together, establishing a conversation was extremely difficult. Eunice would answer questions only in sentence fragments or monosyllables. At the same time she seemed eager for the visits to occur.

> I want to talk to someone bad.... I get so lonesome just sittin' here watchin' TV. I can't go nowhere. I gotta keep an eye on Lawrence. I don't want him on the street at night.

"To be human is to speak" (Heidegger). "Keeping an eye" on a child is a form of parental protectiveness.

She suffers from depression frequently and has to go to the doctor. The doctor tells her "it's no good to be upset." She is particularly worried about Lawrence being influenced by an older boy who has a police record for car theft. On one occasion this boy (a teenager) stole a car and he and Lawrence drove out to Vancouver. She has been relieved because this boy "hasn't been around lately."

A child is one who inspires adult protection, but the influences on a child are often beyond one's control.

She tries to get Lawrence into social activities. He wanted to play hockey with a local pee-wee team, but she couldn't afford equipment. She's happy now, though, that he might be able to play at the Boys' Club down the street. He also goes to Immaculate Conception Church every Sunday. She likes to see him go.

Parenting as pedagogical, a leading of a child into life's ways.

Ideals for a child can be thwarted by circumstance.

On one visit Eunice seemed particularly buoyant because Lawrence's teacher had begun sending home notes remarking on his progress at school. She showed me these with great pride.

A child's progress in the world is a source of pride for a parent.

Last Christmas she had a "full house" when most of the children returned for a visit. How does she feel when the children return? "Oh, I don't mind. It's OK with me if the kids come. As long as there's no lip."

A "full house" is when children return.

Children's "lip" as a speaking back to a parent. A discrediting of a parent by a child.

George, one of the sons "has changed a lot since he went to the ranch. He used to do a lot of things he shouldn't have." ("He may be making $1,200 for the summer.")

Children's life is not fixed but changing. Changes for the Good bring rewards.

Eunice's cousin and her husband have "not been getting along lately, (so) the kids were taken away two weeks ago."

When parents are in conflict there is no place for children.

As I was saying "good-bye" after the fourth visit, Eunice inquired, "Just why is it you've been coming here? Did the Social Worker want you to check up on me?"

Fear of one's parenting being judged by others.

## (c) HOW OTHER PEOPLE'S CHILDREN ARE EXPERIENCED IN THE LIVES OF SOME OF THOSE INVOLVED WITH THEM: THE EXPERIENCE OF EDUCATORS

### (i) Mrs. Ainsley: An elementary school principal (see transcript in Appendix B)

Mrs. Ainsley is the principal of Brackenbridge Elementary School, a large new facility in a suburban development region of a major city. She says, "I have taught all my life." She began as a classroom teacher and thought that would be her life work, "because I was so preoccupied." However, at the urging of one of the supervisors in the school system she became a "consultant" for a number of years, in which she was "working with teachers, helping teachers plan", and "with children in the classroom in demonstration work." After four years she "had to get out" because she was "becoming again in a rut, a comfortable rut." So she accepted an invitation to become principal of a city elementary school, where she stayed ten years before being appointed to her present position. She describes herself as "a very sensitive person, almost too sensitive at times", and, indeed, she displayed in all of our meetings a very high level of nervous energy.

Before our formal conversation begins, she informs me that she has "pneumonia." She brings a sense of urgency to the occasion.

> I've got terrible congestion on my chest. And I just can't stay home. I've got so much to do. I have a commitment to a special education function--after school. Tomorrow we're taking 450 children to the circus. It's just things that propel me. I'm really feeling very badly.

Caring for children means there is a lot to do.

"Things" propel a school administrator.

Originally, after high school, she had planned taking a degree in music, but her mother thought her too young at that stage to leave home to travel two thousand miles to the conservatory. So she thought, "maybe I should try teacher training." Describing her decision, she remarked,

Every adult was once a child, which is carried into the adult present.

> One thing that disillusioned me about music teaching was that I couldn't be sure they'd do their work. You gave your heart and soul to the lesson, then they went away. So that's one factor when I went to consider school teaching.

For some teachers it is deemed most important that children do their work. The school provides an environment where adults can control children's work.

She said she enjoyed working with adults (as a consultant) as much as with children, so I ask her if the enjoyment of those two aspects was in any way different.

> Not really. I suppose it's professional development. It's helping teachers on behalf of kids, eh, the students. And that to me is what it's all about. Education. I like children.

An asking for the "all" of education. Answer: children. Children understood generically.

As a principal, she's often taken the stance with her staff that "children come first", with the result that "boy, your staff will come down on you: 'What about me?' sort of thing."

To put children first, seen as a virtue.

Other teachers feel that they too are part of the "all" of education.

What is it about children she likes?

> Well, I think they're honest. I think that maybe the greatest miracle, see, experience, is having a child who comes to you, year one, grade one, whatever, unable to read, and by the end of the first year is reading. That to me is the greatest miracle. And certainly it is a miracle, when you try to work with a child who can't read, eh?

Children perceived as honest. Children display the miraculous through their progress.

She describes those experiences as the "kinds of things that have excited me--the growth of children, the steady progress."

The sense of the miraculous that children bring is exciting.

> You get them when they're young, and you see them by the time they hit grade four they have become independent learners--if they are successful, in most cases they are.

Children's progress perceived as successful when independence in learning is achieved.

> Independent learners--able to take off on independent study with skills.

She sums this up by saying:

> I guess it's just a very rewarding experience to be with people (children) who give so much of themselves. Kids are like that. They give all, they're sincere, they're appreciative. 'Thank you for bringing us the film on cars', for example--things like that. Whereas I think when you get into upper grades it's sort of different. And that's why I like elementary.

Children give their "all" to adults.
They bring sincerity and appreciation, particularly at the very young grades.

I ask Mrs. Ainsley to elaborate on the experience of excitement which comes from observing a child's "progress." Is there implicit in that excitement a sense of the future? In other words, what inspires us about children when we see their progress is perhaps a sense that the future is going to be OK--that to watch a child progress is to sort of see an unfolding of a life, and reminder in our adult preoccupations that the child, by his progress, comes as a sign of hope. Mrs. Ainsley responds by telling me that her "number one goal statement for children is a 'joy in learning'", through offering "a variety of experiences in the school." Her "number two (goal

What is it about children's progress that inspires excitement in adults?

Does their progress re-assure adults about the future, in some deep sense?

Some adults/teachers have difficulty responding to questions about children and the future. They prefer to emphasize present qualities, like "joy in learn-statement) ... woul be for kids to have good self-esteem, good self-concept, feel good about themselves." She remarks that the latter statement is "something we give lip service to, but boy, it hit home this year."

ing", good self-appreciation, etc.

By this she refers to her belief that children today have "a very negative attitude" about themselves. "Kids ... have this idea, 'It doesn't matter. I could never do anything.' This negativism "came through" on a recent survey conducted throughout her district. When children were asked, 'Are the other children in your school nice?', 51% said 'No.' Mrs. Ainsley attributes this negativism to the fact that children "have had many failures, and they just don't have a good self-concept As a result, in her school, "we've gone to full-time counselling, which is rare in our system today .... Yes, there's a lot of work to be done in the whole human development area of self-concept, self-worth, self-esteem."

Many children today seem to have a negative attitude about themselves, and about each other.

This may result from repeated personal failures.

A mark of adult care for children is to counsel children as to their intrinsic value.

She emphasizes this theme:

> In order to have good self-esteem and self-concept, the kids have got to be success-oriented. And if they're going to be success-oriented that means working at a level. And it doesn't matter whether they're year four, or grade two, or what level, they must be successfully placed.

Such a sense of value is believed to be achieved through the experience of success.

She goes on:

> And then I say, for joy of learning, for self-concept, for success-orientation, the kids have to have some basic skills, or they're not going to be able to be success-oriented. And whether that's future, yes, I guess it is. It seems to me we can turn on tapes, we can turn on TV, but there comes a time when we've got to be able to read some signs as we move around, even if we're just on the road.

One venue for success for a child is to be able to read signs.

I ask Mrs. Ainsley if the movement toward more technologically-oriented instruction bothers her.

> Oh yes. I think human interaction --interaction between child/pupil or teacher/child is the most important thing that happens.

But the most important feature is the human interaction between children themselves, or between a child and a teacher.

To her, that interaction is 'Curriculum.'

That interaction is "Curriculum."

> What it's really all about is 'what goes on between the teacher and child in that classroom.' And I could go on to say that, therefore, your teacher becomes your most important component or factor in the whole educational system.

The "all" of pedagogy is what goes on between a teacher and a child. Education perceived as systematic. The teacher is a component.

Does Mrs. Ainsley feel there's some quality in children that inspires adults to want to work with children or does such an inspiration depend on a prior decision on the part of adults about the nature of the child?

> It varies a lot. It can vary between you and I because of our make-up, our own background. Yes, I think for me, there's something about all children that's great. And whether I can capitalize, and the children can evoke those kinds of feelings in me is pretty much what I am. What I am at that point.

The ability of an adult to work with a child seems to depend most basically on what an adult "is"--rather than what an adult does.

Mrs. Ainsley feels that parents are "much too indulgent" with children today, particularly, say, in money matters. At the same time, whereas ten years ago parents "would be responsible for their children, and accountable", now, "where there is a crisis ... Ifind parents trying to hide. And they don't always give you the true picture, because I think their conscience is bothering them .... And they know better." Ten years ago, she says, parents "would come to grips with a problem." Now they won't because "they're too busy, (and) they're not at home." She blames economic conditions

Parents today are felt to be hiding from their responsibility for children. This marks a crisis.
Parents will not be honest about their children, even when they know better.

for this, particularly high mortgage rates, which force both parents to work, and then leave them emotionally incapable of dealing with "a demanding little family of children who are excited about life."

Such a condition may be shaped by economic conditions.
Parents are left emotionally incapable of meeting the demands of family life.

As a school administrator, Mrs. Ainsley feels herself under increasing pressure from parents to provide daycare services. "'Daycare', they're yelling. 'Get someone to look after our children at noon. I'm working!'." She questions whether the school should be taking on so many "parental responsibilities", but in the end "we have to because that's the way it is." There are "so many things" teachers have to "take on, even caring",

Educators are under pressure to assume parenting functions.

In the end, educators feel morally obliged to "take on caring."

> even just to talk, to pat (the child) on the shoulder and say, 'Hey, you're doing a good job. Thank you very much!' Well, he's just stimulated beyond word because he knows he's pleasing somebody. We haven't time any more to give that positive reinforcement in the home to children.

Care for a child is shown through tangible, tactile gestures, as well as through words. The loss of time in the home to demonstrate such care is regrettable.

Mrs. Ainsley thinks "the school today is oriented to knowing the importance of dignity, praise, reward, (and) positive reinforcement."

I ask Mrs. Ainsley to try to give a brief description of what she thinks her "educational" task is as a principal of a school like Brackenbridge Elementary. She responded by saying,

> My task as I see it is the total development of the individual to his potential. When I say total development, I mean social, emotional, physical fitness, cultural tolerance, citizenship, the rights of others--how we interact with people (of course, part of that is social), and then, of course, our intellectual--and to do that in a happy, happy, positive learning environment.

Educational task seen as individual development of a child, through social interaction, etc. in as happy a way as possible. In the determination to be happy, the pedagogic dimension of suffering is neglected.

For her, the good things about teaching involve remembering the children who were successful, the "kids...(who) have gone on."

To remember children who have "gone on" is a good experience.

> One of the boys was a Rhodes scholar, the Hampson boy. Lisa Ross is in research at the university. That's what it's all about, eh? And when you say, 'What is Education?', well, seeing kids through these stages in their lives become people who can go out into society and make a contribution, live in the world and make for a better world, I suppose.
>
> We want happy, successful individuals and so on. How to do that is developing the child to his maximum

The "all" of education is seeing children develop to be able to live in the world and make it better.

But for some educators the total sense of education

> potential. I don't know what else to say. I guess I've never thought of it in its total sense, you know, education.

has never been reflected on before.

One of her former students, of an immigrant family, just got the "Gold Medal" at the university. The boy's mother said to Mrs. Ainsley the previous evening,

> You know, Anne, if it hadn't been for you being a consultant at that time and taking such an interest in James, and getting him into the public system and getting the schools to consider him not staying in grade one, and so on ....

To teach is to be deeply involved in the lives of children; to be available to a child at critical moments of its life; and to give a child a positive chance in its early years.

These are the kinds of things Mrs. Ainsley regards as the "rewards of teaching." "It's the feedback you get, eh."

A positive word from a child's parent is a true reward.

She has also appreciated the humorous aspects of school life. At the end of a day, she would go home and "have such great laughs" with her husband "over the crazy things that kids would do. It takes a special kind of person." When she goes out in the evening with friends, she tries not to "bring in education ... but invariably, we come around to it. They want to know what's going

Children make adults laugh.

The concerns of education are the concerns of everyone.

on."

For Mrs. Ainsley, "education ... it's been my life." She thinks,

> teachers generally today don't really have the commitment to children that is necessary to realize the kinds of things I spoke about a few minutes ago .... Through the years we have had educators who have been willing to give of self more.

Education is a way of life, which requires deep commitment, a commitment which many teachers today do not have.

In concluding our conversation, Mrs. Ainsley describes herself as a "workaholic. I just work to survive. I work to survive. I work as much as I can because if I didn't do it I'd never make it."

What is the "it" that is made through work?

### (ii) Kevin Souris: An elementary school vice-principal

(transcript in Appendix B)

In his early thirties, Kevin is the vice-principal at Elderberry Elementary School, which, like Brackenbridge is a large facility in a suburban development setting. Talking with Kevin was always an enjoyable experience because not only did he display a genuine care and concern for others, but he did so with an open, warm, self-effacing wit which in turn fostered an openness in those with whom he spoke. Also apparent was his deep sensitivity to children.

After completing his teacher certification requirements in Canada, Kevin taught for two years in Australia in a system which he found "very traditional, very strict and authoritarian." For him as a Canadian, "it wasn't a real enjoyable, relaxed working atmosphere", because there the principal, his assistant, and staff "really ran the show." As an administrator himself, he prefers a more "relaxed" style with other teachers, and in his own Grade Five class (he also teaches part-time) he rejects any "I'm here to teach and you're here to learn" model, in favour of a philosophy of "we're here to develop kids."

Every teacher was once a student, who, as a child, was impressed by significant adults.

Kevin's own interest in becoming a teacher came as a result of being inspired by several of his own teachers when in school himself. His grade nine teacher, however, Mrs. Grosmith, was for him,

> the kind of teacher ... you really respected a lot, and was able to

Respect is something a child gives

> control the classroom through various ways, through a lot of good discipline methods, but not to the extent to which kids were battered or anything like that, and she seemed very human-like, you know, a real person.

He also "really liked" Mr. Solway, another junior high teacher. He looked to Mr. Solway as a model for several reasons. During that period Kevin's father died, so Mr. Solway "became a real neat figure to me as that image."

> He was a young fellow, a young teacher, and really took a concern in kids, and liked kids a lot, you could tell that. He did a lot for kids--spent a lot of extra time with us.

So Kevin went into teaching because he wanted to "give those kinds of models to other students."

Essential to that model, for him as a student, and now as a teacher, is "trust."

> I feel you could trust these people. And I think that's important for kids. It's nice to have someone who is there, who's consistent and can be trusted.

to an adult, when certain qualities are discerned, such as genuine competence. A child can detect what it is to be human; to be real.

A child notices when an adult is available to him, and when the adult is attentive to the real events in a child's life.

Children notice whether or not adults truly like them.

When a child witnesses genuinely human qualities, he comes to understand them as being possible, credible, and something to be passed on.

One of those basic human qualities is trust.

A child wants to know if an adult can be trusted.

He finds that in his school today, indeed, in society, children "don't trust each other enough." At Elderberry Elementary, "we've had a lot of problems with students fighting, and that sort of thing ... they're like little firecrackers, they just explode." So in his teaching Kevin tries to give to the children "life-long skills", particularly teaching them the importance of "caring for each other and taking pride in themselves too."

The quality of trust seems to be collapsing between people, and especially young people.

To teach a child to care for others means to give him something for life.

Part of the reason for the volatile relations between the children, he suggests, is "the neighbourhood", which he characterizes as one in which high social classes and lower classes exist side by side. In the latter instance, there are many single-parent families, "not that they're to blame, but a lot of single-parent families don't have the consistency at home." That sense of consistency is "something we strive for" in Kevin's school.

The collapsing of care is brought on by certain social and economic conditions.

It seems to be difficult for a single parent to be consistent in relations with a child, for example, a quality the school tries to provide.

As a teacher, he's noticed that "the kids we seem to have a fair amount

Transience in families also seems to create conflicts.

of problems with, are the ones that have moved around a lot." There are "some internal problems at home as well, but that, coupled with all this moving, seems to bring about all the conflicts that we have." As a consequence, his school tries to foster, for teachers and children alike, "a sense of being someone in some place."

because to move around means to undermine a child's sense of having a place. A child, as does an adult, needs a "sense of being someone in some place."

I ask Kevin what he thinks is the role of the elementary school today. He replies:

> I think it's a changing role right now, because we're finding that we do have kids that have problems. Academically they're fairly 'with it', but they have social and emotional problems, and the schools now are having to deal with these problems more and more all the time.

So many children seem to be in difficulty today. Academic achievement is not a problem; the problems have more to do with living a human life.

He notes that the "formal goals" outlined by the provincial government are for the "emotional, social, physical, mental and spiritual growth of a child." Up until fairly recently, Kevin argues that the "mental and physical" aspects have taken precedence. Yet as far as he is concerned, "education is total, it's not just to one end", so that if more

To be a teacher is to be concerned with the whole of what a child is and more children are having emotional or social problems (a result he suggests of the decline of home and church) then schools "have to accept that as part of our responsibility, (which) we have to try to deal with" by, for example, "bringing parents in on conferences, or having a counsellor or social worker right at the school." Again he emphasizes that, in his experience, the problems children have are rooted in the fact that so many are from "single-parent families which tend to move around a lot."

Educators may have a moral duty to ensure that children are cared for, especially if families and traditional institutions fail to provide such care. The responsibility may be to parents as well as to children.

> These two things ... seem to go hand in hand. And the fact that they've moved around, and kids haven't been able to make the good contacts with other kids and make good friendships and good meaningful relationships.

Single-parent families and family transience both display to children a model of human relationships which is broken. They both dilute the possibilities for a child's discovery of true friendship, and meaningfulness in relationships.

What does Kevin enjoy about working with children?

> I think I enjoy teaching so much because kids are so different. That it's not working on a treadmill or on an assembly line where everything's the same. They're unique little individuals and they have something different to offer.

Every child is unique, and offers to the adult world something different from what it has known. This is one reason working with children is so enjoyable.

With an average of 27 individuals in the class, it is a "real challenge to make it enjoyable, because I think elementary school has to be really enjoyable and fun."

What could make such a statement true?

For Kevin too, it's important for him to "have a sense that you've really accomplished something, and that you really feel good about yourself." His own goal is to "reach" kids. I felt like I've gotten to almost all the kids. There's a couple that you still can't really get close to. They're still real shy kids."

A teacher is one who reaches out to children.

Some children don't want to be "reached" by some teachers.

Another satisfaction is seeing "kids start caring for other kids", as an example, when he overhears a child say, "'Gee, I'm sorry I did that', or asking somebody over for the night. You know, just being polite and courteous. Because I try to give that model as much as possible ... , when you see it happening in the classroom, it really makes you feel good, it's very satisfying."

It is highly satisfying to an adult to witness a child valuing and practicing what an adult values and tries to practice. A child thus affirms the practicality of adult ideals, and thus restores adult self-confidence.

Sometimes his formal lessons in "relating" fail to transfer to everyday

Children often make a distinction between school life. He remembers engaging the children in a "magic circle" activity where "everybody listens and everybody has a turn, you sit around a circle and you talk about 'feelings'." After one session, a boy came up to Kevin in the middle of a lesson. Kevin said, "Oh, you're interrupting." The boy replied, "Oh, that's only the part when we're in the session. That doesn't apply now does it?" As Kevin put it, "You know, I tried to make the transfer, and it just didn't work."

life and real life, so that even though human relations may be a subject for study in school, a child does not automatically understand it to be concerned with his/her own humanness.

One child who Kevin has had "conflicts" with is also the one he feels a "closeness" with, is Larry, a "real smart kid, a really intelligent boy."

Conflict with a child can lead to closeness with that child.

> It's kind of funny, because as for myself, we try to be courteous with one another; try not to put down what people say, you know, promote a good feeling of self-worth.

Larry, however, "is the one individual that sort of gets me upset because he blurts out without really thinking, or if he does think he's really thought it out well, but just blurts it out." The result is, of course, "he's hurt some-

An adult cannot assume that a child will necessarily imitate specific adult values. A child too has a sense of judgement and discretion. The failure of a child to practice what an adult values can be upsetting.

body else's feelings, and as soon as that's happened, I get a little upset."

Kevin admits he "hasn't really studied it much", but he's been finding that "if I come back and say something to him immediately, he (Larry) immediately goes on the defensive, and so we have a little conflict right away."

> However, if I come back and give him subtle little comments or whatever, he sits and thinks about them for awhile, and immediately we've turned the tables a little bit and all of a sudden his question or his comment isn't directed at anybody. Now it's between Larry and myself and all of a sudden, gee, we've got to do some thinking here before we start speaking, and he feels real good about it when it turns out positive for him, and so do I. When it turns out positive for each other, we both feel like that's one hundred percent.

It is possible, however, for an adult and a child to come to a mutual understanding about an issue so that they become linked together by it. When that occurs both adult and child feel deeply satisfied.

Kevin knows Larry's family background a bit, "so I identify a little bit with him." Larry's parents have "split up", and his father is in a different city. His father's advice to Larry is always, "Well, if somebody tells you something, you tell him right back." For Larry, as Kevin sees it, Dad is really the father, the male figure, with

A true teacher knows the landscape of the children with whom he works.

the result that Larry sees Kevin as "the antagonistic person, sometimes ... and that's where we have our little conflicts."

Sometimes such knowledge brings a teacher in conflict with the child's parents.

> I think we see more eye to eye now. At the start of the year, it was touch and go. I think it's neat to see some growth like that. It gives me a real feeling of satisfaction that I've helped Larry .. identify that not everybody can say and do at free will. Although he's getting this from his father.

A teacher and a parent can be in competition for a child's assent over matters of value, authority, loyalty, etc.

He sums up his "feelings about kids and how I'd like them to feel about kids" this way:

> If I come on to you real strong and boss you around, you're going to end up coming on real strong to someone else and boss them around. And somewhere down the line, someone's going to say, 'Hold it, you can't do that to me. I don't have to do that.' Now some kids can take that sort of thing, (but) as soon as that one child says, 'Look, you can't do that to me', then you can't do that sort of thing to them any more. And it's just all kinds of positive things that you want to try to do. And that's what I try and do. I think I sort of look at 'academics' as almost secondary, but place a lot of emphasis on it, but ....

Children have a will that will not be thwarted by adult intentions for them.

He has little sympathy with "people who say that if I can just get rid of all these discipline problems and get down

Discipline problems with children cannot be disengaged from questions about the essential.

to teaching, boy, we could really learn a lot." As far as Kevin is concerned, "We're not just here to learn. We're here to develop kids through various (means). That's my philosophy for sure. I think that's becoming more and more the trend."

nature of the pedagogic relationship between adult and child.

### (iii) Wendy Bellum: A grade one teacher

Wendy, in her late twenties, has taught grade one for three years. A short, diminutive person, the smallness of her stature is more than compensated by a strong personality revealed through fiery eyes, emphatic speech, and a determined chin. She and her husband have been married for two years and very much want to start a family of their own but, like many young couples today, are unable to marshall the financial resources necessary to establish a home and provide the kind of environment they would wish for children.

Wendy had wanted to be a teacher for "as long as I can remember." In her view, it is one of the "options" available to girls. Her interest has always been to teach "young children. It just happened that way."

The teaching of young children traditionally viewed as women's work.

What was there about young children that attracted her? "I had a naive sense of children, childhood, being young and innocent--sweet little things --and it really appealed to me."

A naive sense of children emphasizes their innocence, their sweetness.

Has she found her expectations about children actually to be the case?

> No, children are very complex little people. They have very well-established behaviour patterns, and their own needs and wants and wishes, confused feelings about things. Certainly not miniature adults, but a lot more complex than I once thought they were.

In real experience, however, it is a sense of the complexity of children that prevails.

What brought about this shift in thinking to Wendy? "Approximately two months of teaching." It was not a shift growing out of any sense of struggle between herself and children; rather, it "just kind of flowed." Contrary to the opinion of most "education students or student nurses" who think of children as

Contrary to common expectations, children are not little creatures who can be moulded and

"'Wow, aren't they sweet little things. And isn't this all marvellous and wonderful'--you know, nice little puppy dogs, and you pat them on the head, and they respond well", for Wendy, it is "through experience (that) you come to realize how much is involved with children .... The complexity of children is there, and working with them, it comes out."

shaped purely according to adult intention for them.

What effect does an awareness of that complexity have on Wendy?

> It's like probably dealing with a group of adults. And of course, when you get into the nitty gritty of teaching, when you want something, of course three kids are off in their own space doing this and that, and it makes life a lot more complicated ....

Dealing with children is much more like dealing with adults. It is complicated because children (like adults) have a will and a sense of their own "space."

By this she means it is a lot more complicated than the impression given to education students at university, where "university ... gives you the picture that all will be a bed of roses ... you'll just lead your children to the knowledge and it will flow into them, and that kind of thing." For Wendy, it's "people who don't have daily contact with children who really see these nice little 'pup-

Typical courses in education faculties and teacher training institutions do not prepare a person for the true realities of living and working with children. That can only be appreciated from daily contact with children.

pies'."

Does Wendy have any children of her own? "No. I have a dog, though!" (laugh) Does she hope to have children some day? "I don't know. I don't know." Is it an issue with her in any way?

> It's not an issue but as one gets older ... I'm certainly not a person who's reaching thirty and thinking, 'Well, time's running out, what are we doing? Having children, or not?'
>
> I think a big issue is financial, for a lot of people, feeling tied down--those sorts of factors. So it's still a big question mark.

For a woman, her biological clock plays an important part in wanting to have children.
But the natural desire to have children is often thwarted by economic considerations, for example.

For both Wendy and her husband, the economic factors are "incredibly" important.

> You can't buy a house without two incomes. As a couple we could swing it for a year. On the other hand, do I want to have a child that someone else will bring up? Just farming it out to babysitters? I can't quite even come to grips with that. Give me unlimited finances and I probably wouldn't hesitate (to have a child).

Her husband feels "more or less the same" about this. "It's a whole topic that's discussed and never resolved. I guess as one gets older, it has to be resolved."

A mother doesn't want to have a child that someone else will have to raise, such as a paid babysitter. That's simply difficult to imagine. Economic factors aside, to have a child is not a matter to hesitate about.
So far the conflict between natural desire for a child and its practical unfeasibility is not resolved.

As a teacher, what does she like about working with children?

> I think I have something to offer to children and perhaps I have a fairly relaxed atmosphere in my classroom. That to me is of some importance--that the children are comfortable and it's a nice place to be. That's for the majority of them.

She also gets a lot of "enjoyment" from the growth of the children: "They grow from knowing me, they grow from the academics, they grow from just the total school situation." Satisfaction comes particularly at the end of a year, and she reflects on the children at the beginning of grade one,

> where they come in and they're just little, fairly dependent people at that point. They want their shoes tied, and all kinds of things along that line. And by the end of the year you see them more able to take care of themselves. Part of it is just growing, where I have very little influence over it. But it happens. I enjoy seeing the changes in children.

An adult enjoys working with children when s/he feels s/he has something to contribute to them. Essential to this is a place where a child and an adult can be comfortable together. Watching children grow is very enjoyable, particularly at the end of a year when it is possible to note how much they have developed over the year, particularly in their independence. The influence of a teacher is only partly responsible for children's development.

Another source of satisfaction occurs when "you might take a bad situation and turn it around into a good one. Say a child has just already had a bad experience and has, well, learned to succeed."

A teacher has a chance to help a child understand that bad experience does not mean hopeless experience.

Wendy says, "I have always had behaviour problems in my class." At the moment she has a little boy who "most of the time basically refuses to work. He just doesn't work. He'll do almost anything or almost everything to avoid working." Wendy has spent "a great deal of time with him or thinking of him, of ways of solving this or trying to help." Her assessment is that the "biggest problem" is the boy's "family background. I know that there's a lot of screwy things going on at the house." Wendy realizes that "for the five hours that I have him every day, I'm certainly not top priority. And there's not much I can do in terms of those kinds of factors."

To refuse, is to make a judgment, to have an opinion at odds with what is proposed, (Latin refutare).

There are days when she succeeds in getting him "working." Sometimes she uses the "stars system--for every few minutes he's working, he gets a star and for ten stars, he can get ten minutes off." There are days when the child comes to school "and he's just a ball of fire ready to work. Other days, the stars don't interest him, he couldn't really care less. Today was one of those kinds

Sometimes a child will value a teacher's stars; at other times he will not.

of days." The result is, "there's a feeling of helplessness there now, almost. Not hopelessness, helplessness--that there's not much I can do."

Often a teacher feels helpless with a child, but not necessarily hopeless.

She is not "hopeless" because of the days which reflect changes in the boy. "He's an example of someone who's changed."

> When he came to us just before Christmas, he was an extremely depressed, sullen little boy who never had anything to say, never any facial expression. He's now at least smiling and talking and even occasionally acting out. So something has happened in between. So there's some kind of a reward there--minor, but something's happening.

A reward for a teacher is to see "something happening" in a child's life, which is revealed through signs, such as facial gestures.

A source of frustration for Wendy in this instance is the "frustration of not being able to do anything with the home, not being able to even lead them to other agencies, not having any kind of power that way."

A young teacher, particularly, can be frustrated by a powerlessness in being able to influence positively a child's bad home life.

There is one boy in Wendy's class, Colin, who occasionally "lashes out" physically at Wendy. At other times, she has "physically restrained a child from hitting" her. But she hasn't

A teacher teaches a child not by reflecting the child back to itself but by showing it new ways, new paths, by displaying alternatives.

"struck back." By "not hitting him back ... I'd be trying to tell him, "We don't hit'." On the other hand, she says,

> I think if some kid really wallopped me, I'd be tempted to wallop him back .... Especially with the little kids where it's such a power play ... they know their limits. They know that's one thing that they can't do, and perhaps by striking out, I think they're, without consciously realizing it, thinking they can engage the adult in the situation by suddenly participating as well. By participating no one loses, no one gains.

In her relations with children at school, does Wendy find herself recalling her own childhood? "Not in the least, not in the least ... nothing that I'm overly conscious of that I'm doing. But there are things, like I'm sure the way my mother brought me up, brought my family up, that I've consciously tried to unlearn."

But a child will sometimes try to entice an adult/teacher to mirror the child itself. This is a temptation which should be resisted, because it means the adult and child then share one sole identity and the adult has capitulated his pedagogic responsibility. Sometimes teachers are not aware that, in their relations with children, they often reflect the habits, values, etc. of their own up-bringing. At other times, certain things surface in their minds.

> What sort of things?
>
> Oh, verbal messages given to children, verbal messages given to me. A lot of that. I was never in a home where there was a lot of physical punishment--maybe a swat to get in or something--but never spanked. However, I think the biggest thing would be the verbal messages--a very common mother-daughter

One example is the verbal messages a daughter receives from a mother.

> thing--that 'That's not good enough', therefore making sure .... (doesn't finish)

On the basis of reading (particularly *My Mother Myself* by Nancy Friday) Wendy feels this was very common. The message was "'What you've just done is no good.' And, of course, people internalize that and that's what they have to fight." According to Wendy, this message came from both mother and her own school experience.

An adult becomes conscious of the child at work within him/her through reading and reflection.

> Our parents were, my parents were immigrants who were in Canada during my important years, who in large part were dealing with survival. Not too much in terms of .... (doesn't complete)

An adult experiences times of wanting to put together the story of his or her own formation.

The children, she feels, were expected to turn out well, and be responsible citizens, but (for the parents), their big thing was "survival." They "didn't have time for Dr. Spock, or any of that kind of stuff. They got right in there and did what they thought was best."

Such an exercise is partly to come to self-understanding, but also to understand the grounds of one's own parents' thoughts and actions.

Ostensibly, there is a difference between what a person *is* and what a person *does*.

Wendy suggests it's hard for children, partly because of the five years experience before coming to school, to understand the difference between 'I don't like you' or 'I don't like what you're doing.' "And even if you give them the verbal message, they don't always take it. It's, you know, 'Like me.' You still hear children say, 'You don't love me and I'm running away from home!'"

Children can't always tell the difference.

Wendy's experience with herself and others (including children) is that "we assume ... that what we experience at home, most people experience." It takes a great effort to become "conscious" of what one has "learned" in order to avoid repeating it. She gives the example of when she was newly married, "one of my best ways of dealing with everything .. was just really losing my cool and yelling and screaming and feeling great." Her husband couldn't understand what was happening until they began to talk about "old learnings", and Wendy became conscious of how screaming and yelling was the way she and her mother dealt with each other.

Both adults and children have a tendency to universalize their particular experience.

Later, it becomes important to see how one's adult behaviour is to a large part something learned as a child in response to specific personally significant people, especially parents.

I remark how amazing is the way the

kinds of modelling we experience as children ourselves seeps into our own personalities. Wendy agrees by saying, "The older you get, the more things you notice."

How could Wendy characterize her experience with children? She doesn't think childhood is a state of being as such.

> Certainly there are some children who are old. I have a little boy who reminds me of a little old nosey lady. Some children are very witty--which is not normally associated with that state of innocence --but really witty and clever.

So as far as Wendy is concerned, children are just "individuals growing, with lack of experience in things. They're a lot more spontaneous than adults, who (adults)...learn not to be."

As an adult, the older one gets the more one realizes how much one has inherited from one's parents.

Some young children already display qualities of very old people. Some children, through their wit, display a keen insight into the human condition. There is no such thing as a child, *per se*, only an individual who lacks experience. But children generally seem more spontaneous than adults, who have learned to be more guarded.

### (iv) James Paterna: A teacher of upper elementary grades

Although James is only twenty-six years old, many of his mannerisms, modes of speech, and ideas about children seem to come from an older person. He gives the impression of being aged before his time. His speech is deliberate, calculated, and very serious. When he touches a child, there is an air of the grandfather about him--warm, embracing, and accepting, but perhaps too, a little paternalistic--a quality which strikes the observer as being incongruous in one so young.

Although he currently teaches at the fourth grade level, James has also realized one of his own "personal objectives" of teaching at most of the other elementary levels, including primary. He felt that it would be a "good objective to see just how many grade levels he could have experience with." Such experience, he felt, would be of assistance "later, in helping with qualifications for, say, administration, or whatever." His formal route to a career in teaching began a year after high school and "getting into a job that was dead-end." The result of this was "a longing to make something more" out of himself, which in turn resulted in his enrolling in a university program, where he met his future wife, an education student.

> Education, of course, appealed to me all along because all through my life I felt I had the ability to work with groups of people and, you know, guide them in cohesive kinds of ways.

Education calls (Latin vocare) people who want to lead others.

So, after his BA, he enrolled in an Education qualifying year. In that program he was "motivated by the material that I was presented there" and, in particular, by some of his professors, who he found "very, very free-spirited and inspirational in the way they presented the occupation to the people that were in the classes." He found "a lot of really positive feedback coming my way, about the position itself, about being involved and about being male in education, particularly ... in elementary."

But often the response to the call is interpreted only in terms of self-interest rather than as interest in standing in a truly pedagogical relationship with others.

Coupled with this experience in a formal setting, James has "always felt the ability to get along with youngsters. And it has since proven true." After four years at various teaching levels he has "yet to run into a problem that I could call seriously stressful." As a consequence, he feels "the situation of

Such a distortion means that teaching is only understood as a form of coping, and avoiding stress, success at which merely reinforces prejudgments about what it means to teach.

the classroom really does fit my abilities to cope with the situations that come up."

He says that he's usually "too busy trying to keep on top of situations to reflect on his own childhood", but he does remember his neighbourhood, "an interesting setting", where he was "older than most of the other kids."

> Now I think back, that particular situation really gave me, maybe not an immediate directive, but a kind of experience with dealing with, you know, organizing people, and in particular, kids .... The more I dwell on it, the more I think that that maybe had a lot to do with how I came to possibly developing these kinds of skills.

In his own classroom teaching, he strives "to create a reciprocity between the students and myself" rather than "strive to give my students freedom" or "strive to be hard on them." If a "situation comes where they're working on too much freedom .... I'll re-establish that reciprocity between the individuals that are involved and myself, and try to hold the line there." If discipline problems "come into form", "I'll try to

Such a distortion also reduces teaching to mere busyness and it suppresses self-reflection.

It also defines teaching as an ability to organize people, especially children.

Reciprocity between student and teacher comes to be regarded as something to be created or manufactured.
Freedom is viewed as something one has the power to grant or deny. Indeed, when the meaning of pedagogy is not really understood, teaching becomes a role to be played or a guise to be put on at personal whim.

be a little more of a person who's not an authority but a person who's involved with the kids."

James doesn't think of children as "being my inferiors", that "I have to answer for." Rather he thinks of them "more or less in terms of a father/son or daughter relationship, where they have, you know, certain things they can do sometimes and at other times they can't."

For example, a paternalistic role can be easily assumed.

When the time comes for children to "own up for a bad deed", he emphasizes, it's a "situation where we're all in it together." On those occasions, he "will present (himself) as being sympathetic to their cause in relation to them having to live up to, or at least own up to, the administration in terms of whatever means of discipline must be imposed on them." He tries to "give" children a sense of "Well, you know, it happened to you. It happened to all of us. It's an experience that we have to deal with. Let's think about it, let's talk about it, let's write about it." Writing

Another role is that of being a confessor, a kind of children's priest.

about such occurrences is one of the "major forms of discipline" that James like to "stress", because in his view it helps children to reflect on "why something happened" as it did. He prefers to "make them try to reason it out. I'll give them hints, at times, and we'll discuss it with others as well." All in all, James "definitely strives for an easy-going, sort of quiet atmosphere, that gives kids a good feeling of security."

When genuine pedagogy is not understood, writing can be used as a form of discipline, as an attempt to impose reflectiveness on children. Such reflectiveness is not a true reflectiveness, because its end is determined in advance. But all such distortions can be carried out in a comfortable, secure environment, where the abuse of pedagogic responsibility can be hidden in comfort.

I ask James if he's ever been in a situation as a teacher where he's felt at "wits end." His reply: "Yes, definitely ... there are occasions when children will push their attention-seeking devices to the limit, to try to get you exactly where they want you." On those occasions, he sees his task to be to "make (the child) aware that ... the things they're doing are not necessary, not desirable." His own tactic is to ask the child, "Can you explain why what you did annoys me, or annoys someone?" Sometimes the children "get a big kick out of it." Nevertheless, James "still

When pedagogy is distorted, children are viewed as being manipulative of the teacher ...

and the teacher presents himself as the one who must be understood by the children, and who sets the judgments as to what "works."

think(s) it works in the long run. It tends to develop mutual respect."

James thinks of his students at school in "special terms. As Room 12 we're unique in that we're one of the top-rated groups in the school." James tries not to press on his students a thinking about the future or their careers. He prefers to "take care of things now rather than think about the future. Childhood should be a special time.' By special, he means "not burdened too heavily with responsibilities." As a consequence, he doesn't "give homework, even though I could."

In such circumstances, a teacher takes pride in being "top."

He regards the future as unimportant for children,

and childhood as a closed condition which should not be concerned with the fundamental need to make a response to life.

In his first year teaching, James had one boy "who was quite an orang-utan ... was very active, hyperactive, unruly, jumping, climbing, yelling, clowning in front of the group." He would be "that type of youngster that would climb up on the shelves and act like a chimp ... anything to get everyone looking at him." At first James "had trouble dealing with him." As time went on, though, "I seemed again to develop a reciprocity

In the end, though, a genuine reciprocity between a tea-with him. As long as we got along in this way, we could get things done in the classroom and (so could) others in the room." James has found it often "takes months to get your class to respect your way of doing things ...." For him, "it's so important that you get that reciprocal respect going with kids. It promotes a maturity in them that reflects in a lot of the things they do."

cher and a child
is the only thing
that seems to work,
to enable life to
go on.

What James find in particular "very, very rewarding" about teaching and dealing with children

> is to think that someone who really didn't have a notion of a certain concept or idea, suddenly comes upon it, and you know that it's going to be one of the things that sticks in their mind and they know about it for the rest of their life.

One of his "most fascinating rewards" involved a boy who was a "new Canadian", who was "fairly bright from all indicators" but was "having trouble with the language." He was "the kind of boy who always had an inquisitive look on his face, as if he was puzzled, or as if he was thinking something over." James can

A very rewarding
aspect of teaching
children is to
witness their discovery
of the world,
their emerging
understanding of
it which will
stay with them for
life.

"recall going up to him very often as he was sitting at his desk at work "unsure of something."

A teacher is one who stands alongside a child and assists the child in interpreting the puzzles of life.

> And I can remember going up to him at his desk and putting my hand on his shoulder, and leaning over to see what he didn't understand. And he would point out what the problem was and I'd lean over and reread the question and redefine it in more clear terms for him.
>
> And you could tell the absolute instant when he would get it. He would just jump. There would be this shudder going right through his body and his hand would automatically go to the paper, and he'd start writing. You know, he'd just carry on, and carry on, and he'd be nodding his head and smiling, and his gears would be going again, you know.
>
> It was just the most incredible feeling just to go over and have this little fellow pick up something from you. You could just sense all of his gears going all the time. He was a very busy looking little fellow. And when the gears got caught up on something, you know, you could see the stress coming, puzzled, the hand would go up, and as soon as you cleared it up for him, boom!, away he'd go again. He'd just be right into high gear again.

It is possible to discern, at times, the moment a child gains insight into things, because the excitement of discovery takes on a bodily manifestation.

This boy has since gone on to be a very good student, and James feels he's had "many like that", that he's "really enjoyed" dealing with. The enjoyment comes from the fact that "they tend to warm to you." James strives "very hard to have my students warm to me and my warming to them." For him, it's the "kind of situation where you develop the kinship between you."

Indeed, James gets called "'Dad' probably as much as (he) gets called (his) name, from kids in the room. Of course that raises quite a bit of laughter whenever that happens, and it's quite often." He admits there are quite a few children "you really can't get through to." He describes those children as "real loners out there ... that have terrible home situations." As a result, these children "stay rigid, no matter what. They just don't open up." Some of them "after a while start to do so, but with most of the kids in my class I get this ... mutual reciprocal thing going, this warmth kind of a thing, definitely within a few months, with as many as I can." James find the children "tend to be very open with me as well." He gets "stories from (the children) that I probably shouldn't (about) what's going on at home."

A genuine relationship between a teacher and a student may be thought of as a form of kinship.

When a teacher gets called "Dad" by young children, they laugh, because they know that a teacher is different from a father.

Some children will not allow themselves to be open to some teachers.

But some will respond after a few months if they discern the teacher is open with them.

Then children will begin to tell their full story.

James has a three-year-old boy of his own. I ask him what he finds to be the differences between living with his own child and the experience of being with the children at school. He remarks that he "often find I have frustrating moments with my (own) youngster, because I'm used to dealing with kids at a certain maturational level." When he goes home and expects to relate to his own child in the same way, "it causes problems. I have to learn to lower my expectation levels."

A teacher relates differently to his own children than to children at school, especially when he makes clear distinctions between maturational levels.

### (v) Joan Underwood: A teacher of children formally labelled 'Educable Mentally Retarded'

Joan, in her early twenties, has just completed her first year as a teacher of children officially categorized as Educable Mentally Retarded (EMR). She has a bright, sunny disposition which enables her to laugh readily and heartily as she talks about some of the things her children do which she finds amusing. Her deep care for and identification with the children in her charge is reflected in her frequent references to the children as "my kids."

When Joan first went to university, she "wanted physiotherapy, but I didn't get into that so I decided to go with Education." She had "really enjoyed working with trainable mentally retarded kids" (TMR) the summer before, so after being accepted by an Education faculty, she chose the Special Education option. Her class in the school is operated by and serves the entire school district. The children "go through a battery of tests" done by the district assessment consultants before being placed in Joan's class. She had twelve children in her room the first year, and was responsible for all academic subjects "except phys. ed."

As far as Joan is concerned, "it's not just children's mental ability that makes them EMRs. Like, you've got a real mixture of problems, or weaknesses .... I don't know. The children generally start in a "regular classroom", then their first teacher may say, "'Well, this child doesn't belong in the regular system' or 'There's definite problems'." Or the children may get "phased out by

A teacher who loves children knows them well. She knows that "retarded" is a very complex term, not just a point on a measuring scale.

Often it's a perception by other teachers that a child "doesn't belong" or has particular problems.

Christmas. A lot depends on that first teacher, you know, sort of not letting them slide through."

I ask Joan to describe some of her children. She tells about Mary, who's "biggest problem is that she lacks confidence in herself", particularly in Math, and in "various other things." In Art, however, "she shows quite a bit of creativity." Joan thinks opportunity for free expression through art is "something kids really need to be able to do--just use their imagination." She feels that "some of the time our systems get too instructional."

One problem may be lack of self-confidence; i.e., having no faith in one's value as a child. Some school subjects foster this lack of faith in some children. Other subjects, like Art, help develop a child's faith. When schools put too much emphasis on teaching children certain subjects, some children become lost.

"A very high percent" of her children come from families that "are really poor." In the province generally, there's "a lot of poverty", because much of the work is seasonal, either lumbering or fishing, with the result that much of the time, families have no reliable income. Joan feels this "contributes a lot to how these kids are." When the time comes for parent-teacher interviews, "I get a very poor turn-out."

Social and economic conditions also contribute to a child's inability to cope with the school's intentions.

When children do badly in school, parents are reluctant to come and talk to the teacher.

She has one little boy, Walter, who's "legally blind." He's had neurological tests, but "they don't really know if it's the message from the eye to the brain; if it's eye-centred, or brain damage." He also has epileptic fits, and because he's under "drug control now --he's been 'out' for half an hour sometimes." In Walter's case, his family is not poor--"they dress him well and everything"--but there's problems with the mother. She's had trouble accepting him. She's "out working twelve hours a day (because) she doesn't like to stay home."

Some children have severe physical disabilities, and often it's difficult for a teacher to know if a child seems retarded because of this, or because of medication for the disability.

Some "retarded" children are not accepted by their own parents.

Lisa is a little girl who was "taken out of the home because they felt there was some abuse." Next year she'll be at another school, "because we can't keep her." She is "very high-strung", and "always talks in a loud voice." Interestingly though, whenever she was up at the front of the room, "sharing something she'd done, she'd talk in such a sweet, soft voice." But the rest of the time "she'd be really loud." Joan had

Some children are abused by their parents.

Even a teacher who cares deeply for her children has difficulty coping with them at times.

"worked and worked and worked and worked on her to get her to calm down", and "she did improve." But then in March she went back to the foster home until June, and "she was just wound right up again."

Even when progress with a child becomes evident, this is often negated by other circumstances.

Joan describes Doanld as "definitely the lowest I have in terms of, um, you know."

It is difficult to put into words just what it is a retarded child lacks.

> He'd look at you and he'd look right through you, right past. You'd have to repeat things at least twice, maybe three times, following very simple directions, for me to get him to go to such and such a spot in the room .... If it was something he didn't want to do, he'd just look at me.

A teacher sometimes feels that a retarded child is looking at, looking through, and looking past him or her. At the same time, there's the sense that the child has definite desires.

She remarks on Donald's circumstances: "Another poor home set-up. The father is bringing up the two kids. The mother left. And the father is extremely low too. So it's not much of a situation at home."

Joan says she's "very firm with the kids."

A teacher of retarded children may sense that it's important to be firm with them.

> I really believe that if you ask them to do something, you have to carry it through. And that once you start, like you say, 'I want

> you to do this' and they say, 'I don't want to do it' and you say, 'Oh, OK', then you have problems from then on. Unless it's something that you can work out.

An example of 'working something out' would be an incident between Joan and Ralph. As a class, they were just finishing up the day. All the children were tidying up their desks and "we were waiting for the bus." Ralph, however, "wouldn't sit down." He said, "'I don't have to'." Joan responded: "'Oh, Ralph, everyone's sitting down waiting for the busses to be called, and unless you do so I'm afraid you'll have to miss your bus'." Ralph would not sit down, however. "He was just so defiant some days. The most defiant child I've ever run across." Joan would insist, "You sit down!", and still Ralph wouldn't. Then she said, "Ralph, come over here." She sat him in a chair and "held him there" and said "You sit there till I count to ten." Still Ralph was intractable. Joan thought, "I just can't take another hour of him" because if he missed that bus he'd have to stay for a whole hour. Joan thought, " ... there's no

But sometimes that firmness must take the form of a negotiated compromise with a child, because even a retarded child will let a teacher know that he has a personal dignity that will not be crushed by blind submission to the teacher's requests.

This understanding about a child is revealed through the daily comings and goings of classroom life.

But such understanding must be seen (perceived, discerned) in order to be believed.

way I want him here for another hour" so she "sat him in that chair and counted to ten as fast as I could ever count to ten, then I said, 'Fine, you go to your bus'." And off Ralph went.

The principal remarked one day that "he's never seen a child who could be so defiant, some days." Ralph "wouldn't do a thing the principal asked him to do." Joan has

> tried everything, and if anything worked, it never worked for long. He was just impossible. But I still like him. I still love him. He's good. But boy, he's the one that ran my patience to the limit. And the kids would know.

She has found, on the whole, however, that all of her children, even the ones that misbehave, "once they get used to me, they'll do what I ask them to do." But on the playground, though, it's often a different story. "If another teacher tells them to get away from something, or to 'Stop that!', or tries to tell them what to do", the teacher is frequently ignored. Sometimes a teacher

Some educators will only believe that a child's willfulness is an act of defiance of authority.

A teacher who truly loves a child will continue to love the child even though the child runs the teacher's patience to the limit. Even retarded children know that a teacher's patience has a limit.

A teacher who spends all day every day with her children develops a special understanding with them, which enables all of them to live together and get along. Another teacher from outside does not possess this understanding, and therefore has no authority with the children.

will come into the staff room after lunch and say, "'My God, Joan, I don't know what you're going to do this afternoon, but they're, like, crazy out there!'"

In her own classroom, Joan has found "really cute" the fact that once the children "learned my rules, my reactions", they'd start "sort of reprimanding each other, like 'Don't do that or you'll make the teacher growl at ya!' or 'You'll make the teacher mad!'" One day Joan had laryngitis and the children said, "'Teacher can't talk today, she doesn't have a voice'."

Retarded children, like normal children, take particular delight in imitating their teacher.

A lot of Joan's children suffer from physical abuse at home. Generally, they try to be secretive about it while at the same time wanting Joan to know. "Kids come in and say, 'I can't tell you what happened last night. I'm not supposed to tell'." One child, Merle, came to school one day with a big burn on his arm. He said, "'Yah, I fell off the couch and hurt myself on the arm." His arm was red and full of puss. The principal said, "'That's not from a fall,

When children are abused by parents they are left conflicted between wanting to tell someone and loyalty to parental requests for secrecy.

When a child is abused, the teacher often has difficulty determining exactly what happened.

Merle .... You burnt that didn't you!'" Merle just looked and said, 'Mum was making coffee and I leaned on the stove'." Joan asked, "'Merle, were you told not to tell us about this?'" Merle replied, "'Ya'." Neither Joan nor the principal was able to exact the full story of what happened. "We still don't know for sure."

She describes her children as "a very loveable bunch of kids."

> They seem to express emotions quicker than normal kids. Not all of them (but) some of them are miserable. They hate everybody. But ... a lot of them, they like everybody unless you do really, really cross them. They get real mad at you. But I'm sure the next day they forget it, whereas another child might bear a grudge. We must teach kids to do that, I don't know.

Retarded children seem to be particularly loveable, because they are so open.

Some are filled with hate for the world, but most, while they may get angry, do not hold a grudge.

As far as her formal teaching program is concerned, Joan does "a lot more day-to-day learning things than a regular classroom teacher would do." Together they "go to the bank, (go) grocery shopping, and learn personal cleanliness", etc. According to Joan, her principal feels "my kids should be doing

The pedagogy of working with retarded children is much more explicitly centred in the ongoing life of the world, rather than academic matters.

But a school administrator sometimes stresses the impormore academic things", but she finds she just can't.

tance of academic things.

> The behaviour problems are the biggest thing. Not with all of them, but with enough of them that it makes it hard to work with kids that behave, because somebody else was always running up and down the hall fighting and whatever.

So, in her class, they do "a lot of social growth things. Just getting them to share. I'm sure Donald's never shared anything--shared a toy, or shared crayons when he's colouring or anything like that."

Learning to share is a difficult task for some children.

What gives Joan particular satisfaction is when "you ask them to do something, or you're teaching them something, and you're telling them, 'This is what I want you to do', and then they try it." For her, if the children are "eager to try it and willing at least to make that attempt", that "makes me feel good, because they want to learn, whatever it is you're doing along the way."

A particular reward for a teacher is seeing the children attempt to, and succeed in, appropriating the values and intentions the teacher puts before them.

> I guess when I feel best is when they get it and they're happy that they've got it. That's what makes me feel good, because you can see

To see children pleased with their own accomplishments is in turn pleasing

> that they're so pleased with themselves.

for a teacher.

The "it" that the children "get" doesn't have to be any "big challenge." For Donald, "it" was simply learning to do the "crossover knot" in tying his shoes.

Success for a retarded child is mastery of simple basic procedures, like tying shoes.

> When he got that, we just went nuts. All the kids were pattin' him on the back and going, 'Was that ever good!' I'd say, 'Donald, why don't you show Penny. Show her what you can do ....' And he'd just be beaming from ear to ear that he could do that.

Joan finds herself laughing on many occasions. Once, another teacher overheard three of Joan's children talking while waiting for the bus. It was just prior to her marriage, and the children were discussing what they were going to "call" her after that event. Merle asked Lisa,

Like normal children, retarded children can make an adult laugh, usually when an adult witnesses a child stumbling through the maze of the adult world at large.

> What are we going to call teacher now that she's gettin' married? Lisa said, 'Mrs. D.' 'Why?' 'Well, we can't call her Miss any more 'cause she's gonna be married.'

Lisa was repeating what Joan had told them about the tradition of a woman changing her name when she marries.

Her two oldest girls, Lisa and Clare, are chronic "gigglers." They remind Joan of "when I was little--I know I was awful giddy sometimes, and it just felt like I needed a good laugh, to get it out of your system." So sometimes when she would be "trying to teach them, and these kids would be carrying on", she would say to them,

A teacher/adult can understand children's behaviour particularly when it reflects so nearly the characteristics of one's own early life.

> 'OK, Hold it! Have a good laugh! Let's laugh!' And, of course, as soon as you say something like that, they laugh, because that's such an abnormal thing to say to them. And I'd say, 'Let's have a good laugh', and they'd start laughing, and then some other kids would join in because they were laughing at their laugh. And we'd have a laugh, and I'd say, 'There! Is that enough now?' and they'd keep laughing (laugh) but ... you have to ....

Laughing with children is infectious and difficult to suppress. Sometimes it's better just to laugh things out with children.

Joan finds it "awfully hard to follow a lesson plan" in her work with these children. Also, she doesn't "like doing them. I hate writing lesson plans." She prefers "the spontaneity", because some days the children will "sit there all day" while she tries to get "work out of them", knowing full well "they weren't taking anything in." In such

Planning for retarded children, in a formal sense, often seems irrelevant.

instances, she could see "no sense" in going on like that, say in Math. So she would "change things ... or get into something else." She emphasizes that "we would follow (the Curriculum) enough that they (the children) weren't running the classroom. It wasn't like they thought they were, anyway."

The formal curriculum can be a useful controlling device for a teacher.

> But I think that any teacher has to, not only a teacher, just anybody that works with kids, you have to be in tune with the way kids are, back there. They have needs, they have good days and bad days, and if they're on a bad day, why make it worse?

But it seems far more important, for a teacher who cares for her children, to be "in tune" with the children.

As far as being prepared for teaching in her present circumstances is concerned, Joan doesn't feel that "what I learned at university was worth much at all." Some of her courses "made her aware of certain disabilities or weaknesses in children, and things like that." But in terms of "real learning, I would say it's been outside of that .... My training has been my four-month practicum and my first year teaching."

Real learning of what's involved in working with children is achieved by being with children day by day, not through formal academic courses about children.

Asked to sum up how she sees children after her experience in the classroom, Joan put it this way:

> I think of kids as imaginative and loving fun, with a whole world of learning ahead of them. They don't always need someone else to teach them either. Maybe we adults think, 'Oh! They can't learn without us!' But if you ever watch a child sit with some tools, toys, puzzles, blocks, or whatever, and never having seen that put together before--and (yet) they teach themselves, either by themselves, or by being taught by another child. They learn things from each other, or if they decide they do need something, they learn without us. I love watching what they do.

A teacher learns much about children simply by watching them. She learns how much children teach themselves, either by themselves or from one another.

Watching children can be an act of love.

# CHAPTER VI

# OF WHAT DOES THE LANGUAGE OF LIVING WITH CHILDREN SPEAK?

## The Hermeneutic Writing

### An Introduction

Heaving heard, in the preceding chapter, people speak in various ways of their experience of children, and having attempted to highlight and strengthen the ontological pointing that issues through the speaking, the task now is to engage in the form of hermeneutic writing which Gadamer describes as a "thinking the material through."[1] As suggested in Chapter IV, such writing attempts to lift what is spoken by individuals out of the burden of its specificity in personal utterances in an effort to make it speak again within the broader conversation of the human community. Hermeneutic writing has a poetic function; that is, it "shows men in conversation."[2] It shows human conversation, not in its individuality, but human conversation in an ideational form.

Hermeneutic writing can also be understood in one way as a kind of deliberate exaggeration; that is, it gathers the idiosyncratic and remoulds it into a new form which then has the power to speak again. This new form speaks again, not because it speaks in a necessarily fuller or more complete way, but rather in a new way. It is its newness, however, which necessarily constitutes its one-sidedness, but as one-sided, it calls out for completion through the reflection and interpretation of the person who reads it. As does all written work, hermeneutic writing requires, for the fulfillment of its purpose, the active conversational involvement of a reader.

As the speech in Chapter V unfolds, we note at almost every turn how it speaks beyond itself, how it is that in virtually every utterance occurs a pointing to that which lies behind it, a view of the world brought into resonance through each word. In drawing the speech into a new conversation, it will be impossible to address each and every issue in its possible fullness. This is writing's "greater helplessness", as Plato referred to it;[3] it always inevitably leaves something unsaid. But the true strength of writing is the obverse of its weakness, for in leaving something still to be said, it opens its object for the reflective engagement of others. The vitality of writing lies precisely in its ambiguity; it rests in its power of evocation to call, from within its incompletion, for the word of another.

There are many suggestive themes emergent in the ontological pointings of the previous chapter which could be addressed here. One such theme might be the way in which a living relationship to a child is almost always experienced as an ongoing event, never static and never ending. Living with children is very much an up and down affair for an adult, as is, no doubt, the relationship with an adult for a child. There is the sense that every step for both is one which is negotiated at every step. Sometimes, for example, an adult senses the need to intervene in a child's activity for the child's own protection. Such intervention can spark resistance in a child, and the adult is left wondering about the nature of parental or pedagogic authority and responsibility. The immense resiliency that is sensed to exist in adult-child relations is another aspect of this experience, which is apparent particularly in the narratives of John Goodfellow and Warren and Ardelle Parley, for example.

Another theme might be identified in the way a child brings adults, and particularly parents, closer together. This is given account most specifically by Louise Kinderloss as she speaks about the way the death of her and her husband's baby daughter brought a new strength to their marriage, a strength that grows from an awareness of their human vulnerability.

Both Mrs. Ainsley and Joan Underwood mention that children make adults laugh. What is it about certain things children do and say which adults find so humorous? Is it because on such occasions adults see themselves innocently reflected back on themselves in ways that put them in touch with apparently absurd contradictions within human experience? Or is it because in witnessing children stumble through the linguistic and practical codes of adult life, adults are reminded of their own early faltering efforts, anxiously executed? And with a hindsight now made possible by a child's present efforts, adults are reminded that their own early anxieties should not have been taken so seriously? In other words, children's words and deeds somehow bring relief to adult self-seriousness.

Such questions and issues as those touched on above certainly warrant further attention. The hermeneutic writing attempted here, however, is organized around four basic themes or clusters. These are "thought through" as four different ways in which the presence of children in the world is grasped, apprehended, and understood in the experience of adults. The first theme is referred to as "The Insistent Voice." In writing through this theme, attention is drawn to the enormous power of children in adult experience, a power so overwhelming and yet so subtle and so little understood, yet too of truly revolutionary impact. Indeed, the American writer Emerson once described a child as "the beginning of a revolution";[4] not in any direct political sense, but in the sense that children eternally penetrate the adult world in such a way as to overturn its priorities, intrude upon its plans, and, in very subtle ways, call it into question. The term "voice" is used here to underscore the relationship between word and body in the way children come into and confront the adult world. For "voice", in one sense, has a connotation of disembodiment, and the experience of children in the world often is not so much of a concrete objectivated nature but rather more as an undefinable presence, present within an adult yearning, or wondering, or questioning. But without doubt, too, voice implies a body belonging to one who speaks, so that the voice of children in the world is not merely ethereal, but it is also hard, fleshly, carnal. Children in this sense come into the world as a form of incarnate word.[5]

A second theme is discussed as "The Need for a Place", which refers to the way in which adults so often experience a child's coming into the world as an inquiry into the fundamental receptivity of the world for a child. So the "need" expressed here certainly refers to the need of a child for a place to be a child, to come to its own, just as, ontologically, anything that is requires a place to be what it is. But in adult experience, children are understood to require not just any place, but rather they evoke a questioning in adults as to a place's suitability. Indeed, the very desire for children at all seems to require for its fulfillment a knowledge that a place for children is ready, either, say in terms of a resolution in commitment between adult partners, or in terms of a perceived adequacy of place as being able to provide for a child's basic needs, such as shelter, protection, care, etc.[6]

A third theme, entitled "The Speaking of the Generations and the Sense of What is Right", attempts to think through the way in which a child's arrival seems to provoke, perhaps for the first time for many adults, a new self-reflection concerning the generational constitution of the adult's own life. In other words, a child emerges in the world as a tangible witness to the essential continuity between one generation and another. Through the event of a child's arrival, what is brought to life for parents and others is a new conversation concerning their own human make-up. The child comes as one who asks for its own ancestral grounds. Of course, it does not ask explicitly, but the asking only emerges as the parents, for example, are born themselves as parents the moment the child itself is born. The birth of the parents through the child's birth brings a new agenda for adults as parents, one of the most prominent features being a questioning as to how they themselves were parented, and were brought forth in and through the world. Such reflection raises for parents and others a questioning about what is right, good, and true, in relations with children, and a wondering about how and whether certain values, personal characteristics and forms of behaviour received from their own parents may be recapitulated in their own children. Parenting becomes, for many adults, a profound responsibility, which is a calling forth of an ability fo make a response to life.

A fourth theme is proposed in a cluster of three interconnected sub-themes: "Extending Oneself, Watching Children

Grow, Reaching Kids." It addresses the frequently remarked upon experience for many adults, particularly parents, that one's children provide a very definite sense of having oneself extended in the world. At the same time, even though children share intimately one's own flesh and blood, still they are separate individuals who have their own lives to live. But their very separateness becomes itself a calling to adults to reach out to children again as a way of sustaining the deep integrity of the human journey. It is this sense of belonging to children which is also at once a separateness from them as Other, that motivates the vital, hopeful dialogue betwwen old and young.

Following the exploration of the four themes, attention is given more distinctly to the experience of those who live and work with children who are not their own. The discussions given account in the third section of Chapter V were all with adults who were teachers and educators, so the reflection here focusses particularly on their experience in school settings. Through the discussion, it becomes possible to understand how experience with the children of others differs from the parental experience in important ways. Those who live and work with the children of others are in a unique position to perceive and understand the profound crisis which presently exists on a broad cultural level in relations between old and young.

It may be asked how and why the particular themes developed here were selected for hermeneutic exploration. What is their claim to valid status as being worthy of attention? In much recent research working from phenomenological traditions, the procedure is to identify fundamental commonalities lying within descriptions of experience and then to organize such commonalities into thematic units for purposes of exploration.[7] In a hermeneutic study such as this the interest is also to identify what are heard to be the dominant ontological issues speaking through the spoken 'data' of experience, and the selection and organization of themes explored here does represent an interpretive judgement that the themes identified touch on what seems to be most powerfully present in the experience of the participants.

At the same time, however, it has been discussed throughout this study how it is that hermeneutic inquiry finds its fundamental modus through a unique appreciation of the nature and function of language, and particularly language understood as conversation and dialogue. This means that all hermeneutic exploration represents a form of dialogue between speakers and hearers, hearers who then speak from an interpretive appreciation of what it is they have heard. But what is understood to have been heard can only be heard as it somehow resonates within the experience of the hearer. To be appropriately understood, then, what is spoken anew from the hearing must issue from an acknowledgement of that within the experience of the hearer which allows the granting of understanding. Here it may be necessary for one engaged in hermeneutic writing to make explicit that which makes possible his or her interpretations. This is not to reduce hermeneutic writing to a quasi-psychologism, for as we saw in Chapter IV, such writing is more a poetic art than a craft explicable within a determinate set of necessary antecedents. Nevertheless, a making explicit of a hermeneutic writer's personal landscape enables a reader to participate more fully in the total "conversation which we ourselves are", as Gadamer described it. In Appendix C, therefore, the writer provides a brief autobiographical statement which attempts to elucidate the personal orientation brought to the experiment in hermeneutic writing which follows. In the writing which follows, the numbers placed to the right of the text refer to those pages in Chapter V from which pointings and speech fragments, etc. have been selected.

## The Insistent Voice

What words would be adequate to title that theme which seems to thread its way through all of the subjects' speech over and over again, the simple theme of the persistent presence of children in the adult world. It seems so obvious as to be barely worth mentioning--that children *are*, and that they are, here and now, among *us*.

And yet, how it is that children are with us? In days of old, children were described as being "born without speech" (Latin *infans*) but the speechlessness of children does not mean they have nothing to say, but rather that what is required for our living together with them is something more than words. It is not words *per se* that are required, words which always come bound within a grammar preordaining the prejudices of our relations. No, children are speechless as a form of invitation to adults to make public the grounds of their own speaking to children.

Hence it is that the presence of children in the adult world always comes as a form of insistence or intrusion. By intrusion, we do not mean in the sense of invasion of privacy, although that may be part of it. Rather we mean intrusion in its original sense of "pushing or thrusting in" (Latin *intrudere*). So that even though doctors tell mothers to "push" during childbirth, is it not also the child who is pushing and thrusting his way into our world, announcing his arrival in ways, far beyond any grammar, and which send us reeling and scurrying about in trial-and-error fashion? "Why is he crying? Is she hungry? Does he need to be changed?", are all questions which expose a fundamentally new ignorance on our part, a being pushed into a new life whose language we still need to learn.

This insistent quality to the presence of children in the world is both a spoken and an unspoken event. In the case of Dan, the young bachelor enjoying the good

life overlooking the ocean, preoccupied with his hobbies
of scuba diving and playing the field with girls after
living with his former girlfriend, we hear the voice of
children explicitly in his statements about wanting to
have children someday and in his imagining about being 101
a good father.

But more than this, we hear it most fundamentally through the silent underside of such statements; that somehow the voice of children is of such a power, such an insistence, that it is able to penetrate through the most densely rationalized and celebrated childlessness.

In the case of Anne, for example, the single prof-
essional woman, one hears a firm insistence that children
were "never wanted", that "I always wanted to be a re- 103
searcher", that "there is nothing aesthetically or intel- 104
lectually stimulating" about having children. Yet, in
spite of the forcefulness of this language, reinforced as
it is by the consensus of friends of similar persuasion,
one also hears the admission that "should circumstances
change" (namely, being married to someone who wanted
children) then she would say, "Well, of course we will 105
have children."

Similarly with Dan, even though he is able to enjoy quite freely all the benefits of a childless state, including a fully contracepted, hence fully practiced, sexuality, nevertheless even in the midst of this, he hears the voice of children through his wondering whether the lusty paroxysms have any purpose other than driving one to seek out more of them. As he says, "maybe kids have something to do with it." 101

The insistent voice of children is a voice of its own; one which speaks on its own terms. That is, it is a voice not dependent on the preconceived plans and intentions of the adult world, but is of such an independent power that it can overturn and undermine the most intractible and adult willfulness against it. The practice of contraception, for example, particularly as a wide-spread publicly legitimated cultural form, can be understood as a seeping into the very loin and passion of modern consciousness the power of technical control and reason. At base, it represents the appropriation unto itself of an adult determination only to accept the voice of children on its own adult terms. Contraception means to act against conception, to act against what is received (Latin concipere), the practice of which means to close off the voice of the young except on terms acceptable to a planned consciousness. And yet, as Rosanne, our eighteen-year-old unmarried mother-to-be put it, "It just doesn't seem right." For her it just didn't seem right
to heed the words of her older adult sister to "go on 114
the pill", as if to display to herself and others an in-

tention to sexual practice divorced from an acknowledgement of its inherent conceptual power. In a contracepted culture, pregnancy becomes something to be feared, yet it is a fear which in turn resists itself, in spite of appeals to a pre-conditioned logic. "Emotions" told Rosanne to keep her child, but "logic" told her to "surren- 112
der it", to give it up.

Mrs. Duquesne, living out the years of her fecundi-
ty in a different era, "always wanted children" yet had 154
to "wait" five years for her first child's arrival. Maxine, who at sixteen feels she has "seen the world", bears
within her own young womb the contradiction of "hopin'" 107
she wasn't pregnant, yet knowing that she "should be" because of "that one stupid time." John, the highly intelligent young honours student with dreams of international travel and career, finds those plans way-laid by the intrusion of a young life which arrives on the scene right in the midst of his entrenched ambivalences about the woman he embraced in a moment of passion. So it is then, that the voice of children is a voice that comes on its own terms, almost as if from beyond time and circumstance, intruding into both as a bearer of something new in creation.

Does this mean that since children come on their own terms, that preparing a place for them, making plans for them, even planning to have them, somehow violates what they are? On the contrary. The voice of children requires for its full incarnation a place which will receive it, nurture it, and, indeed, listen to it. Without such a place, a child cannot be a child, nor can the adults to whom it presents itself, hear what is being said to them.

## The Need for A Place

On a simple level it seems almost redundant to say that for children to 'be', they require a place that will receive them. Yet, what are the existential implications for adults of living in a culture that increasingly denies young parents, for example, the opportunity of providing a place for children? Wendy, the young teacher approaching the chronological limit of her fertility, would love to have children but cannot afford a home in 189
which to nurture them. Indeed, Dan's plans, too, are subverted by the high cost of physical space in which to 100
raise a family. Kevin, the young vice-principal, sees more and more clearly the relationship between children who are profoundly disturbed and the degree to which they and their families have "moved around" a great deal from 180
place to place. As a consequence he sets as a basic intent for his school the fostering of an environment where teachers and children alike can have "a sense of being someone in some place." 180

But more important even than a physical space for

children, is the necessity of a receptive community
which views the arrival of a child as something to be
welcomed. Indeed, such an attitude is what, in the end,
makes the conception of a child even conceivable at all.
For Anne it is the thought of being in community (marri-
age) with someone else who desires children that inspires 105
her to shed her own commitment to childlessness. Maxine, 107
who doesn't "come from anywhere" and is homeless, is in
no position to receive a child, and her first impulse is
to abort. "You know, you go into the hospital one day 108
and you come out and it's over." Rosanne, on the other
hand, "really loved the guy" and "wanted to have his 112
child." Hence it is for her an issue of great ambiva-
lence whether to "keep the baby or surrender it." John's
wife Sheila had enormous difficulty accepting Brian's
birth, even years later, because of a conception that was
not wanted. Brian's tenseness as a child speaks of the
lack of a place sensed for him from his mother, and John's
anguish as both husband and parent is rooted in his belief
that he was unable to provide a place where he could "see
a child raised in an atmosphere that I would have wished."119
Eunice, displaced herself as a child, finds it impossible 163
to provide a place for her own children, to the degree
that her children must be removed by the Social Service
Department, who in turn will try to 'place' the children
in a supposedly better place.

The Nesbitts, who feel "cheated" by being "dealt an
unfair deck of cards" in having their daughter, Mary, born
severely retarded, nevertheless have "come to accept Mary
as a fact." They display that acceptance through the 161
tangible provisions made for her, such as having their
family van fitted for wheelchair use, and having Mary's
picture 'placed' alongside that of Robyn, their other
daughter.

Though ~~the~~ Nesbitts have made a place for Mary, and
have received her with a welcome, it is in their relations
with the larger world that their remorse sets in.
For in the larger world of the normative order of things,
people like Mary are regarded as aberrations to be feared.
Even in church there was no sense of welcoming place for
Mary: "It was as if people were afraid because they 159
weren't sure what Mary was going to do or say next." And
as they sit with their crippled daughter and watch their
"neighbours go off skiing", they "think of the things we 161
wish we could do." Their "constant worry" is "what if
something happens to us?"; that is, who will provide a 161
place for Mary in their absence?

Louise, Mrs. Duquesne, and Warren and Ardelle all
looked forward to the arrival of their children. Louise 128
was "ready to settle down" after several years of being a
"party type." Mrs. Duquesne "always wanted" to have 154
children. For her, there is a certain sadness that, now

that her children are adults, she herself has been displaced. After breaking her leg, Mrs. Duquesne's children had to "come out, dispose of my furniture, dispose of my home." 152

Warren went so far as to say that "no couple in all 142
of history were happier with the birth and earlier years of their children" than were he and Ardelle. Their recent problems with their children, however, have resulted from a recent move from their old home thousands of miles 143
away. In the disruption of the move, there was a tension in the air, and they did not have the time nor the patience to explain day-to-day decisions and events to their children; that is, to provide a sense of participation for the children in their adult world. Rather they resorted to orders, such as "You do it now because I said so! I've given you a command, do it!" Always, this sort of behaviour as parents has brought "rebellion" on the part of the children. It is as if in their revolt, children insist on their rightful place in the adult world; that their voice is itself a voice that demands to be heard in the context of adult affairs.

## The Speaking of the Generations and the Sense of What is Right

What is the nature of the place to which children arrive? It is a place which holds within itself the language of generations; a language which children, by their presence, bring to speech. A child brings into focus what has been happening for years and years, within a family, or within a community, a focussing which in turn brings to new importance questions about 'what is right' in relations between old and young.

Even for Daniel, though still without children, when he does think about having them, he also thinks about his own parents, and their unhappiness, which he feels could have been assuaged if he and his brothers and sisters hadn't been on the scene: "if it wasn't for us kids they wouldn't have stayed together. I wouldn't want that to 101
be the case with me." Part of Rosanne's ambivalence about what to do with her child is rooted in the fact that her father had gotten her mother pregnant before marriage, but "he stuck by her, and they had a family and made it. So he thinks there's no reason the guy shouldn't stay, you know." 114

With John, we hear with particular clarity this theme of generational speaking aroused by the presence of a child. As he put it, "When things like this (the pregnancy) come up, your life flashes before your eyes, your 116
whole past, and future expectations, plans, etc." In his own case, as the oldest of ten children, he was the one to whom the others looked for leadership and example. When Sheila became pregnant accidentally, he felt he had "let the family down." In his relationship with Sheila, 117

news of the impending birth brought to the surface a whole hidden scenario of which he had previously only an inkling. "All hell broke loose with Sheila's mother" 116
when she heard of the pregnancy, and for the first time John began to wonder, "What's been going on all these years? What kind of a life has my wife been experiencing? Has she been showing me a false side of her?" And as it turned out some of his "greatest fears were real ones," that in a very real sense his "wife knew nothing but cold conflict." 117

Kevin, the young vice-principal who also teaches grade five, finds many of his words and actions with his own students to be guided by inspiration he received as a child himself from teachers. For example, Mr. Solway 178
"became a real neat (father) figure" to Kevin when his own father died. Mrs. Grosmith was for him the kind of 177
teacher "you really respected a lot ... a very human-like, real person." For him as a student, these were people he could "trust." As a result, Kevin went into teaching because he wanted to "give those kinds of models to other students ... to be someone who is there, who's consistent and can be trusted." 178

On a surface level, this theme does not seem to be an issue for many. James, the grade four teacher, claims to be "too busy trying to keep on top of situa- 199
tions to reflect on (his) own childhood." Yet this 'top

down' language which runs throughout his speech, reflects his own rather paternalistic style of engaging with his students. Indeed, he himself characterizes those relations "more or less in terms of a father/son or father/daughter relationship", and gets called "Dad" by students as much as he is called by name. This "raises quite a 205 bit of laughter whenever it happens."

Wendy, when asked whether, in her relations with children at school, she finds herself recalling her own childhood, replied, "Not in the least, not in the least 193 ... nothing that I'm overly conscious of that I'm doing." Yet she goes on to qualify this by saying, "But there are things, like, I'm sure the way my mother brought me up, brought my family up that I've consciously tried to unlearn."

The most important way in which the generational voice speaks out of the presence of children occurs when adults who care for children are pressed to decide whether to raise them as they themselves were raised, or whether, as Warren put it, "there is a better way." 137 The search for a better way implies, of course, that the original way was not so good, or needed improvement. The original way, in this case, refers to the way the present adult, once child, remembers that childhood, a memory brought to the present through the child newly present. A new child raises the hope in adults that the pains and mistakes of the past can be remedied, that a once thwarted course of relations can be set right, or perhaps transcended, and that a new start can be made in establishing a sense of what is right between adults and children.

John's wife, Sheila, looked forward so much more to the arrival of the second child, after the accidental first. She felt that although "everyone makes mistakes", she would "be able to do everything right" with the second child. A second child provided a "chance to work things out for the best." Ardelle's mother died when she was fourteen and her father was in his sixties when she was a teenager. She's hoping with her boys she'll be "a very tolerant mother when the kids become teenagers, for the lack of things she lost", such as having a parent with whom to discuss the various problems of adolescence. In raising her own children, she wants to put a lot of emphasis on doing things together as a family, such as taking holidays. 122 135

Warren says he had "extremely good relationships" with his parents until he was twelve, and "extremely poor from there on." By his own account, he was raised in a "very, very tight religious upbringing." Up until twelve he "would have died for the faith ... and after twelve would have died to prevent it." He ran away from home at 137

sixteen. Even though he acknowledges his father always
acted out of "his sense of what was right", Warren "totally
disagreed then and still disagrees now" with some of 141
his father's "tactics." He and his father "never once 140
had a conversation." As a consequence, both he and Ardelle
lay great stress with their children on "reasoning", 143
making sure as best as possible that the children
"understand" their actions as parents.

Does this mean that the sense of what is "right" in relations with children is something to be defined largely in terms of one's own, or even others' previous experience as a child? That is, that having right relations with children is largely a matter of experience, either personally achieved or internalized as the inherited wisdom of generations gone before embodied in, say, 'old wives tales', or in moral injunctions such as "spare the rod and spoil the child"? Warren says that one can never
really be sure where the sense of "rightness" comes from, 140
whether it comes from "your own upbringing", from "solid demands" such as moralisms, or from "the fact that as you do things, the kids read in what you think is appropriate", and behave accordingly.

Without doubt, the sense of what is right in relations with children may be all of these, in a formal sense. That is, as an adult, one certainly defines what is good for children on the basis of what one felt was

good for oneself as a child. Similarly, one may "choose 141
to be concerned" (Warren's words) about recapitulating
aspects one felt to be wrong in one's own early life.
Or one may listen to the sedimented wisdom of the elders,
and be gratified by children's obedience to it. But in
the end, as Warren says, "the truth is no matter how many
times we talk or think about it ... the main conclusion you
come to is that 'I don't know'." Warren continues, "You
just don't know, either how you're going to react, or
what to expect, or even what your values really are." 148

But perhaps the 'not knowing' is itself a form of
knowing, for to acknowledge the limits of knowing, yet
still to be able to live with children in spite of that
limitedness, is to acknowledge something of profound importance;
namely, that children contain within themselves
something the adult world can never know. Every child,
though born to a particular set of parents, and linked to
'the generations' by the power of flesh and blood, nevertheless
every child, in a fundamental sense, lives beyond
both. As Ardelle put it, sometimes as parents they feel
themselves to be living with "complete strangers." It is 133
this 'otherness' of every child that invites a response
from the adult world. And it is within the nature of the
response to that otherness that lies the determination as
to whether what transpires between adult and child is to
be something living or not. Living with children for an
adult means living in the ambiguity between the known and

the unknown. What inspires vitality in relations with the young is not an insistent appeal to what is known, which inevitably leads to a kind of rigid moralizing, a bringing about of the eclipse of "conversation", as Warren said of relations with his father. 140 Rather, 'living together' with children requires the upholding of a hope that what is beyond oneself will still be there for oneself in spite of its otherness. This in turn requires a trust in children, a trust in their otherness, which in turn inspires the possibility of experiencing the world to be trustworthy.

## Extending Oneself, Watching Children Grow, Reaching Kids

Many people spoke of their experience of children as providing an extension of themselves as adults. Whenever such things were discussed, it was often also in the context of a sense of a child's individuality and growth as a new person. Witnessing this growth was usually a source not only of great delight, but also of profound mystery and wonder.

John said that when Brian was born, "it made a lot 118 of things more meaningful." He went on: "In a very real sense, something of myself had been extended, and resulted in something brand new, something special." There was a feeling of "great humility in having a part in such a process that is really a mysterious one", a feeling of "the whole meaning of life", and "regeneration."

Louise regarded Blair as "an extension" of her life, 124
"you know, an individual." She had difficulty expressing her meaning: "Gosh, I don't know. I suppose, well, I'm not going to live forever and my child has a lot of qualities in him that he'll carry on through generations. And at least I know there's someone to carry on part of me." There was a definite sense, in having Blair, that "life just doesn't come to an end, it's carried on through someone else." It made Louise think, "I'm really lucky to carry on."

Warren and Ardelle spoke of their decision, after 138
"relating" to each other for four years, to "turn ourselves into three." And now, as Warren put it, "We're six", meaning 'we' as parents and child living together for six years. Yet the 'we' is not amorphous. "We can sit completely awestruck by the way our kids behave as other people, as other beings. I guess it's the independence from you that becomes part of the awe. In trying
to express these things, Warren admits to becoming "con- 139
fused" and to have difficulty "comprehending." Ardelle 139
says she finds it all "just very pleasing." She "very much enjoys both of (her) children", and "likes to watch them grow."

When those involved intimately with other people's children were asked what sustained them most in their

life and work with children, they often replied in one
way or another with an expression of delight in the
growth of children. Mrs. Ainsley, for example, describes
as "exciting" children's "steady progress." She thinks 168
that the "greatest miracle is having a child who comes to
you, year one, grade one, unable to read, and by the end
of the first year is reading." James finds it "very, 203
very rewarding to think that someone who really didn't
have a notion of a certain concept or idea suddenly comes
upon it." He described one of his "most fascinating rewards"
involving a new Canadian student who used to physically
shudder when he gained a new insight. "It was
just the most incredible feeling just to go over and have
this little fellow pick up something from you." Joan,
working with retarded children "just went nuts" the day
Donald learned to tie his own shoes. 216

Perhaps it is not so coincidental to describe the
growth of children as "incredible" (James), "a miracle" 204 168
(Mrs. Ainsley), "awesome" (Warren), "mysterious" (John); 138 118
all words which speak of a certain humility in the face
of an event which is somehow beyond strict rational comprehension.
And yet what is it that inspires this wonder
when we see children making progress through our world?
Surely it is not just a narcissistic satisfaction of seeing
ourselves reflected back on ourselves through our
children. That may, indeed, be part of it, particularly

as manifest in the speech of those who tend to mark the growth of children as simply in terms of the grasping of adult concepts. But perhaps more deeply, the wonder is a wondering as to how it could be that what is so much like us in so many respects, our very flesh and blood, is also so independent from us, so different, so free; that what is an extension of our own lives, is also an extension beyond our lives. And in that extension beyond ourselves we witness almost tangibly the unfolding of creation itself, a witnessing that reduces us to awe. Watching a child take a first step, tying his shoes, saying her first words, learning to read, etc. are 'awesome' not because of the mechanics involved, as described, for example, in paediatrics textbooks, or teacher's guides, but because through such events one is drawn inexorably into a first-hand encounter with something which cannot be named except that without it nothing is, nothing lives, nothing works, nothing goes on. What reduces an articulate man like Warren to verbal bumbling in the presence of his own children running about the house is not his lack of facility with words but rather an acknowledgement that he is in the presence of something so new and novel there are no words to describe it. For words always speak of that which has gone before, but a child lives as one who goes beyond that which has gone before, leading the way into a deeper appreciation of the essential creative mystery at the heart of human experience of the world. And so it is too that teachers of the young hold a position of special privilege in life, for theirs is a position of living and working at the very nexus between the old and the new, a vantage point deep within the well-springs of the future.

What is being referred to when people speak of the desire to "reach" a child, even to touch it? As a father, John spoke of this, as did Kevin, who spoke not only of "reaching kids" but also of "getting to" them. James referred to children who "you really can't get through to" no matter how diligent the effort to do so. 119 182 205

Perhaps we can understand this more fully when we hear Louise speak of the enormous difficulty she experienced in responding to her newly born baby daughter, 129 about to die. Even though she visited the hospital every day, she found she could not bring herself to touch the child, except at the last, when, as she said, "I felt I had to", after the medical authorities informed her "there was no hope." Louise and Wally had refused to have the baby baptized, that is, touched sacramentally, because they "kept hoping and hoping." In other words, if the baby had been born healthy, Louise, like most others, would have had no difficulty reaching out to her child, to touch it. But the baby's proximity to death makes this difficult for her. It is as if, when a child is healthy, one wants to reach out to it as a way of

reaching out to life itself, to be able to hold in one's arms the living, breathing, pulsing, squirming embodiment of that which makes all things new. A reluctance to hold a dying child is to hold on to the possibility of hope, to hold on to the possibility that through "praying the whole time", as Louise expressed it, that for which a 130
child comes may yet be realized. To refuse to hold a dying child, to refuse to have it touched sacramentally, is to refuse the possibility of hopelessness, to "refuse the reality of it (the dying) really happening", as Louise said. So that not only does a child hold within itself hope made flesh, but it also embodies that for which one hopes as an adult. A child is borne on by the hope that adults hold for it, just as it carries forward within itself on its own terms, the living embodiment of a living hope yet to be revealed in its fullness.

## Living and Working with Other People's Children

### The Experience of Some Educators

Within the broad differentiation we have made between those without children or with their own, and those who live and work with children in school settings, it is possible to hear some profound differences in the language concerning meanings held for children. In general, we can say that the experience of having children of one's own, or even thinking about having them, raises all the issues we have discussed so far in a very primal way,

such that the existential transformations undergone by
parents, for example, are much more profound than those
experienced or allowed by teachers. The blood-tie that
exists between parents and children links very basically
the growth of the child with the growth of the adult, so
that when parents speak of their experiences, the language
is highly personal. When school people speak, however,
they usually speak of children more generically,
such as in statements made by Joan, who describes hers as
"a very loveable bunch of kids", or her colleague who 214
would say after a hectic round of playground duty, "My
God, Joan, your kids are going crazy out there." 213

The implications of this distinction between parental
experience and that of educators are important for a
number of reasons. As we mentioned, for parents, the
questions which the presence of a child brings to adult
life come with a far deeper sense of urgency, and demand
a deeper personal re-evaluation than is the case for,
say, teachers. Several of our parenting subjects, for
example, spoke of how their children brought them closer
to "reality." As John said of the arrival of Brian, "it 118
brought a lot of reality to the forefront"; and Louise
remarked that before Blair came, she "never hit reality,
and then when you have a baby, it really hits you." The 128
language here speaks of how one's own child relativizes
one's sense of what life is about, putting one in touch

with realities never known to exist. As Warren said, "There are things that have to do with the birth of the child that were beyond me, which were beyond our 138
choice." It is this sense of the beyondness of children for parents, which also in turn demands an eventual "letting them go", as Mrs. Duquesne put it. 156

With the teachers in our study, we hear nothing of this kind of adult re-assessment precipitated by the presence of children except perhaps by Wendy, the primary teacher who realized after two months of teaching what "complex little people" children are. This view was in 187
contrast to her earlier "naive sense of children" which was rather romantic and sentimental. Generally, however, we can say that, for the teachers spoken with, adulthood and the meaning of maturity seem to be very much sealed issues. Those involved in the formal project of "educating" children tend to interpret their life with children very much within a closed-off understanding of their task, which even though couched perhaps in Mrs. Ainsley's lang- 171
uage of "interaction" and James' "reciprocity", still the 199
possibilities of the deep voice of children are not attended to.

Mrs. Ainsley, for example, after twenty-five years within a school system, still speaks of her school life largely in terms of the language of "work." She chose 176
school teaching as a career over that of being a music

teacher because in the latter capacity she "couldn't be
sure they (the children) would do their work." And in 167
summing up her career, at the end of our conversation,
she remarked, "I work to survive. I work as much as I 176
can because if I didn't do it, I'd never make it." The
busy-ness of her work is of such a nature that even though
she was suffering from pneumonia at the time of our conversation, she felt propelled, not by children, per se,
but by "things", things like "taking children to the circus" and "special education functions." Indeed, her sense
of being propelled is so strong that while on the one
hand she can say, "education has been my life", she can
also make the rather startling admission that "I guess
I've never thought of it in its total sense, you know, 175
education."

For her, "education ... is what it's all about",
coupled with the fact that "I like children", and that,
as a school administrator, her policy is "children come 168
first." But the language she uses to describe her understanding of children displays in turn a view of them as
having no creative voice, but rather as those to be inducted into a pre-ordained set of values and determinations of progress: "We want happy successful individuals 174
and so on." In calling to mind those children who have
been successful, she thinks of a Rhodes Scholar and a
Gold Medalist at the university. "Caring" for children 173
is spoken of in terms of patting a child on the shoulder

and saying, "Hey, you're doing a good job. Thank you
very much." Her language concerning children is steeped
in the jargon of developmental and behavioural psycholo-
gy wherein her task as an educator is defined as the
bringing about of "the development of the individual to
his potential ... in a happy, positive learning environ- 174
ment." Her "number one goal statement for children is a 169
'joy in learning', through offering a variety of experi-
ences in school." Her "number two (goal statement) would
be for kids to have good self-esteem, good self-concept,
(and) feel good about themselves." The questions of what
the learning is that children are to take joy in, and
what is required for children to feel good about them-
selves are not subjects for reflection, but rather taken
for granted. Children learn to "feel good about them-
selves" through "positive reinforcement"; that is, adult 173
reinforcement of everything that as an adult one deter-
mines to be important.

This sort of unreflectiveness and inability to hear the voice of children is apparent also in the speech of James. The tone of his language reflects an understanding of himself-as-teacher as one who manages and controls children, in a paternalistic way. It should be noted that to say this does not mean his interactions with children are in any way unpleasant. Indeed, as we saw earlier, the children in his class find it amusing when he is inadvertently called "Dad" by some pupils. But the

ability of children to laugh at James' paternalism may only be a mark of their adaptability and resilience, rather than a sign of a genuinely creative encounter between adult and child. For, at bottom, what we hear in James' speech is an adult who prides himself on his ability to manipulate others for purposes of control. What inspired James to enter the teaching profession was his feeling he "had the ability to work with groups of people and...guide them in cohesive kinds of ways." Similarly 198
he has found that "the situation of the classroom really does fit my abilities to cope with the situations that come up", such that after four years at various teaching levels he has "yet to run into a problem that I could call seriously stressful." In his theorizing about teaching he emphasizes developing a "reciprocity" between 199
himself and his students but the impression given is not of a genuine doing or giving on both sides (Latin, reciprocus) but rather perhaps a seeming to be reciprocal.

For example, when children commit a "bad deed" and 200
the time comes for them to "own up for it", James will present himself "as being sympathetic to their cause", as far as, say, "owning up to the administration in terms of whatever means of discipline must be imposed on them." He even tries to give the impression that, "Well, you know, it happened to you. It happened to all of us. It's an experience that we have to deal with." His most frequently used method of 'dealing' with such incidents,

is getting the child or children to "write about the experience", 200
which James regards as one of his "major 201
forms of discipline." In his view, writing helps children
to reflect on "why something happened" as it did.
If the children get stuck in their reasoning, James will
"give them hints." On those occasions when James feels
at his "wits' end" with children, he interprets this as 201
being a result of children "pushing their attention-seeking
devices to the limit, to try to get you exactly
where they want you." At such times his tactic is to
ask the child, "Can you explain why what you did annoys
me?"

In both of the above instances, we can see at work a determination to preserve at all costs what is taken to be true adult behaviour, and that the pedagogic intent in relations with children is to convince them of the power and complete acceptability of what is given as adult. The 'reasoning' which James encourages in children is not a reasoning together in genuine mutual self-reflection, not a genuine reciprocity as he would claim it to be, but rather a reasoning on the part of children which will in turn become acceptable only when it completely matches his own. When the child-reasoning is failing to meet its mark, James will drop "hints" as to how it can be appropriately redeemed. He has found it
often "takes months to get your class to respect your way 203

of doing things." There is a certain irony in his remark that when he goes home and expects to relate to his own 206 child in the same way as he does with his students, that "it causes problems. I have to learn to lower my expectation levels." For James, childhood is a sealed condition in the sense that he believes it is a "special time", not to be "burdened too heavily with responsibilities" and a concern about the "future." To say such 202 things is to suggest that one's day to day dealings with children are undergirded by a belief in children's genuine incapacity to make a response to the special world of the adult.

We hear a much more genuine adult-child reciprocity through the speech of Kevin, the young vice-principal. We might call it an authentic hermeneutic reciprocity because it is built on an acknowledgement of the distinctive otherness of children, and on an understanding of adult-as-pedagogue as one charged to learn to live in relation to that otherness in such a way as to accept the possibility of having to undergo personal transformation through an engagement with children. As Kevin says, "I 181 think I enjoy teaching so much because kids are so different." For him, teaching is "not working on a treadmill or an assembly line where everything's the same", because children are "unique little individuals and they have something different to offer."

In his teaching activities Kevin emphasizes a learn-
ing to "care" for one another, wherein both teacher and 182
student come to realize the effects they have on each
other. Another of his activities is the "magic circle" 183
where "everybody listens and everybody has a turn, you
sit around a circle and you talk about feelings."

He has little sympathy with people who say that "if
I can just get rid of all these discipline problems and
get down to teaching, boy, we could really learn a lot." 185
This is a recognition that "discipline problems", in and
of themselves, speak of something to be learned in terms
of adult-child relations and a recognition that when a
child says, "'Look, you can't do that to me', then you
can't do that to them any more." For Kevin, teaching is
not so much "getting children to respect my way of doing
things", as James would have it, but rather a learning to
see "eye to eye" with children. This means that sometimes 185
there is antagonism and conflict, as in relations between
Kevin and Larry, but "when it turns out positive for each
other, we both feel like that's, like, one hundred per-
cent."

This understanding of teaching as somehow embedded in a search for a genuine reciprocity between adult and child points to a crisis which seems emergent through all of our teachers' talk, a crisis concerning what is the dominant reality in school life. Over and over again we hear teachers speak of the increasing number of "behaviour problems", "discipline problems", "disturbed children", etc. who come each day to the modern classroom, to the degree that an understanding of school life as being an occasion when children learn 'subjects' has become almost impossible, for all practical purposes. It is as if children themselves, in their disturbance, are voicing a resistance to any form of life which does not pay heed to what lies prior to any concern about, say, 'academics'. That is, prior to any adult concern about teaching a child mathematics, or social studies or science, is the child itself, whose presence in the adult world must be deeply understood before any unreflective adult determination of what is "good for children" can be effected.

An appreciation of this often brings teachers into
conflict with administrators, the latter carrying more
firmly in their mandate a predetermined public charge
that schools should be places where children learn things
deemed by adults to be good for them. We hear this conflict in Joan's account. Her special education classroom
is filled with children of such profound deprivation,
that to hear her speak of a genuine joy and laughter between herself and her students can be regarded as a true
accomplishment. Yet, intruding into that accomplishment
is the voice of the principal who feels the "kids should 214
be doing more academic things." The sense of prescription which lies behind such an injunction can be seen as

taking on a form of violence when it is issued out of an inattentiveness to what is the basic nature of the case between a teacher and her students; namely, a struggling on the part of an adult and children to live together in the house of being.

Educators, perhaps more than any other public group, stand in the unique position of living and working with other people's children on a daily basis. Classroom teachers, whose public dealings with children are the most intimate of all, can determine from that vantage point that, as Wendy put it, "People who don't have daily contact with children" can easily misunderstand the true "complexity" of children and what is involved in living and working with them. What is most striking in virtually all of the teachers' speech, with the exception of James, is the perception of an emerging state of public crisis in adult/child relations, and that that crisis can be understood as issuing from a lack of public attention to those very features we have determined to be present at the essential foundation of parental experience. That is, within the inner sanctum of parental experience of children is heard an insistent call from children for a sense of place, a sense of place where the fundamental continuity of human life can find its fulfillment through an extending of present realities through children themselves. That continuity and extension are understood primordially to be realized only through a reaching out to those to whom one has given life and a re-embracing of them in an eternal conversation.

Having made this attempt at hermeneutic writing, the need now is for reflection on what such an endeavor can mean for the central issues of the study, which concerns understanding relations between adults and children in a new way. How could one summarize the "findings" of such a study? In what new directions could a study like this point? These and other issues will be addressed briefly in the following final chapter.

# CHAPTER VII

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

This study began with a concern that, in terms of public policy deliberation, and formal theorizing about children in academic circles, children have been separated off from any meaningful engagement within the self-reflection of the broader adult community. Valerie Suransky argues this point strongly:

> We now separate children from the world of work; we dichotomize play from work, we deny the significance of the child's contribution to the cultural forms of everyday life. We infantilize children's perceptions and "school" their minds through the domestication of their critical curiosity and consciousness.[1]

In this study, what has been witnessed through the speech of all those given voice is the profound intensity that suffuses the adult experience of living with children in the world. And it is an intensity that issues from a recognition that the young life which emerges from one's own very life is, indeed, both part of one's own life, and yet also separate from it. So that, on the basis of a study such as this, the interest cannot be simply to articulate a plan for the re-subsumption of children within a fore-closed adult universe--a return to the "miniature adultism" which was the prevailing image of childhood before the rise of the middle classes in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.[2] Rather, the concern must be to place at the centre of adult deliberation about children what lies at the heart of adult experience with them, which is a truly revolutionary struggle between an old order and a new order: between a living set of conditions already present and that which penetrates into those conditions as a questioning of their fundamental human quality. As Warren expressed it, as a result of having children, "the whole world becomes a different place",[3] and its differentness lies precisely in the way the coming of a child calls for a response from those to whom it arrives. Children call for adult responsibility; that is, they call for the ability of adults to make a response to life, as that life is incarnated in their very midst.

Parents and others involved with children perceive very clearly that each child is unique,[4] expressing an individuality [5] that is not simply learned or conditioned by circumstances. But the uniqueness and individuality of a child are not features expressive of something which exists completely alien unto itself. Otherwise, as Dilthey says,[6] it could not be recognized for what it is. Rather, the individuality of a child can only be something that gains its recognition with reference to that which it is not. But the is-not-ness has no meaning apart from the is-ness from which it gains its unique identification. So the separateness of children is not a pure separateness, but rather an identity which is gained dialectically in relation to that from which it springs.

A living relationship between a child and an adult is not something that can merely be assumed on the basis of a biological tie. It can be heard frequently throughout the narratives in Chapter V that children are keen to discern whether that which has given them biological life also has the capacity to give them human life. Adults who live with children intimately, notice how it is that a child is constantly testing out the world in which it finds itself, checking to see if that world is receptive; i.e., if it is inhabited by that which, in some deep and mysteriously understood way, resonates with a child's primordial fore-knowledge of what it requires to be itself. So, for example, a child notices when an adult is available to it, and when the adult is attentive to the real events in the child's life.[7] Children notice whether or not adults truly like them,[8] and they want to know if an adult can be trusted.[9] If a child senses an inhospitableness from an adult, it will "run away"[10] or "refuse to work" at what is put before it as a project. To "refuse" (Latin refutare) implies the making of a judgment, the forming of an opinion at odds with what is proposed. Refusing, turning away, running away, are, in a profound sense, always affirmative actions, and in the child's case, represent a searching for that which is a truer human home.[12] The problems which teachers increasingly witness in the lives of children in school are not primarily problems of academic achievement. They are, rather, problems having to do with living a human life.[13]

This means that genuine authority in relations between old and young is not something that an adult can claim over a child in any a priori way by virtue of, say, biological right or pedagogic license. Rather, authority is that which a child grants to an adult when it discerns what it knows, even in a pre-rational and pre-linguistic way, to be required for its own human fulfillment. Just as a parent can "know" what a child requires without benefit of formal language,[14] so too a child gives assent to a parent or to a teacher on grounds the truth of which lie prior to formal ratiocination.

This insight has important pedagogical implications, for it underscores that genuine relations between adults and children are not pre-eminently matters to be objectively determined in teaching or parenting manuals but rather are lived, and can only live, within a particular way or manner established between old and young. Beekman calls such a way of being as "child-friendly",[15] but such friendliness cannot mean a form of posturing, or posing as a lover of children discretely understood. Rather it must mean a radical self-reflective attitude which dares to be for a child what a child already is for the adult; namely, one who stands before another speechless; that is, open and receptive to the speech of the world. A relation of genuine human vitality between young and old occurs when the radical innocent openness of the child to the world[16] meshes in dialogue with the radical self-reflective openness of an adult. When adult and child dialogically come to this meeting point, they both feel "one hundred percent."[17] This sense of meeting is what accounts for the profound satisfactions that so many adults expressed concerning their life with children.[18] For when an adult and a child genuinely meet each other, what has occurred is a giving of assent on the part of a child to what has been held out for it in life's way: it is an assent that the way is a positively human way; a way in which another young human being can find a way. And so too, when an adult receives assent on the part of a child, there is a sense of being granted a moment, a space, along the way, which is in turn an affirmation that there, indeed, is a way. Thus it is that when an adult and a child truly meet, a child grants a parent or a teacher its life. It is an occasion described by some as one of no higher pleasure.[19]

Such a pleasure is not easily achieved. It is not just a matter of instinct, because it has to do with discerning what is good, right, and true, which in turn are linked with questions concerning the constitution of genuine originality, and true creativity. For the response-ability of any human life is not just to be human in some vague, liberal, generic sense, but to be truly this human being or that--to be truly Maxine rather than Rosanne, truly John rather than Kevin. It is to discern one's true calling as Mary or Ardelle, which means engaging in a deep reflection on how one has come to be as one is in order to then freely choose what one already is. It means to give assent to one's own particular calling as truly own's own. This is the primordial struggle of every adult (once child), and every child (adult-to-be). It is a struggle always emergent in the context of a situation, a place, and a set of relations which define the issues through which that which calls us, the eternal logos, is to be heard. But while the languages of our circumstances may vary, what is eternal is the call to be what we already truly are. A child, by virtue of its arrival and its presentation of itself purely and simply as itself, shows us the way to be truly what we already are. Thus it is that the child, as Edith Cobb suggests, shares the life of the poet,[20] the true creator, the true original. But what a child knows and lives pre-reflectively, we as adults can only know by an act of will, which is that the world is an open book, shared by all, into which and by which we read ourselves day by day, learning with every timid, teetering step who we are in this awesome universe, sustained only by love and hope. A child shows us this, and thus it is that unless we "become _as_ children", we cannot see "the Kingdom."[21] That is, any adult political vision is fundamentally imporverished if it does not hear the life of a child which alone has the power to clearly discern that which is to be trusted for the living and sharing of a human life.

The lessons which emerge from living with children are never finished, just as true reflection about parenting never ceases.[22] For what is learned in living with children is the discernment of how living can go on, a learning of what is required for a genuine human discourse. Thus it is that what is presented as a "conclusion" to a study such as this could never be in the conventional manner of a list of summary findings. Rather, what can be issued is an invitation and a challenge to enter into a theorizing about living with children which gives full consideration to the vital nature of the subject.[23] What is called for is a theorizing, not in the contemporary scientific sense of theory construction designed to unify objects of investigation in order to dominate them. Rather, what is needed is a restoration of the ancient Greek sense of theory (Greek theoria) which is "the highest manner of being human", and a "sharing in the total order itself."[24] To theorize about living with children involves in a very real sense a sharing of life with them--a holding them, a putting them to bed, a reading a story with them, an engagement with them in a conversation about bugs, or even arguing with them. Because it is in that intimacy of a genuine sharing of the world with a child that a child opens its true nature[25] as it trusts the openness of the adult with whom it lives. A profound understanding of children, therefore, cannot be gained simply by reading books on child development or by taking teacher training courses. Rather, it emerges within the tactile embrace of a young life with an older one. To genuinely live with a child has the character of true play,[26] wherein the key element is not so much the players themselves, each participating in its own private, subjective ways, but rather the game itself, which draws the players into itself and thus becomes the actual subjectum of the playing. To describe this study as "hermeneutic", then, means to point not to either child nor adult alone, but to weave around and about that which both adult and child are about in their life together; all in an effort to disclose that which forever remains a mystery, but without which we cannot live.

# NOTES

## Chapter 1. INTRODUCTION

1. Valerie Polokow Suransky, *The Erosion of Childhood* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 8.

2. Deborah Lott Holmes and Frederick J. Morrison, *The Child* (Monterey: Brooks Cole Publishing, 1979), ii.

3. Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, translated by William Glen-Doepel (London: Sheed and Ward, Second edition, 1979), 429.

4. Paul Ricoeur, *Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences*, edited and translated by John Thompson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 108.

5. J. H. van den Berg, *The Changing Nature of Man* (New York: Delta Publishing, 1975), 32.

6. Philippe Aries, *Centuries of Childhood*, translated by Robert Baldick (New York: Vintage Books, 1962). Other important works in the history of childhood include: Lloyd de Mause, "The Evolution of Childhood," *History of Childhood Quarterly*, 1 (1974): 503-606; John Demos, "Developmental Perspectives on the History of Childhood," *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 2 (1971): 315-28; David Hunt, *Parents and Children in History* (New York: Basic Books, 1970); Arlene Skolnick, *Rethinking Childhood* (Boston: Little Brown, 1976). A good bibliographic source for the history of childhood is Manuael D. Lopez, "A Guide to the Interdisciplinary Literature of the History of Childhood," *History of Childhood Quarterly*, 1 (1974): 463-94.

7. Gerald R. Patterson, *Living with Children: New Methods for Parents and Teachers* (Champaign, Illinois: Research Press, 1968, 1971, 1976, 1980).

8. van den Berg, 5.

9. Ibid.

10. Ann Wood, *Growing Up with Divorced Parents: A Phenomenological Study of Preschool Children's Experiences*. University of Michigan: Unpublished PhD dissertation (1982).

11. Dieter Misgeld, "The Problem of Self-Reflection and the Study of Children's Culture." Toronto: Unpublished paper, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (1979): 10.

12. Ibid., Section II, 2.

13. *Truth and Method*, 340.

14. Some of the most important works include: Wiliam Outhwaite, *Understanding Social Life* (London: George Allen and Unwin, Ltd., 1975); Anthony Giddens, *New Rules of Sociological Method* (London: Hutchinson and Company, 1976); and Fred R. Dallmayr and Thomas A. McCarthy, editors, *Understanding and Social Inquiry* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1977).

15. One of the most interesting of such studies is Valerie Suransky's *Erosion of Childhood*, a study of day-care in the United States (see note 1). While Suransky cites her work

as an example of the "hermeneutic approach", it is, in fact, an excellent ethnographic study.

16. *Truth and Method*, 427.
17. *Ibid.*, 354.

## Chapter II. THE FOUNDATIONS OF CONTEMPORARY KNOWLEDGE ABOUT CHILDREN

1. Raymond Williams notes that the term "positivism" has become, in recent usage, "a swear-word by which nobody is swearing." The word was introduced by Auguste Comte in 1830 to denote real or actual existence (Latin, *ponere*, laid down). Comte argued that the human mind passed from a primary stage of theological interpretation through a stage of metaphysical and abstract interpretation to a mature stage of *positive* or scientific understanding. Comte defined "positivism" as "The representation of facts without any admixture of theory or mythology" (1892). The term later became used as part of a general argument about empiricism and scientific method. Its present popular sense is as a critique of naive objectivity, and the critique of positivism is based on what is felt to be the ambiguity of the concept of 'observable facts', in its common limitation to facts subject to physical measurement, or repeatable and verifiable measurement. It is argued that not only does this neglect the position of the observer, who is also a fact and not merely an instrument, but that it neglects experiences and questions which are not 'measureable' in this way. The term has long been dropped by those defending the position being attacked, but the issues for science which the critique of positivism raises are still important. See Raymond Williams, "Positivist," in *Key Words* (Glasgow: Fontana, 1976), 200-201. For a general history of positivism, see Leszek Kolakowski, *Thought* (New York: Doubleday, 1968).

2. Karl Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1936, 1972), 18.

3. See Arlene Skolnick, "The Limits of Childhood: Conceptions of Child Development and Social Context," *Law and Contemporary Problems*, 39, no. 3 (1975).

4. Granville Stanley Hall, "The Contents of Children's Minds," in *Aspects of Child Life and Education* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1907).

5. Alfred North Whitehead, *Science and the Modern World* (New York: Basic Books, 1967), 16.

6. Mannheim, ibid.

7. Whitehead, 5.

8. Ibid.

9. Ibid.

10. Ibid., 17.

11. Mannheim, 8.

12. Rene Descartes, *A Discourse of a Method for the Well Considering of Reason and Discovery of Truth in the Sciences (1649)*, translated by R. Bentley (London: Dawson, 1966).

13. William Barrett, The Illusion of Technique (New York: Anchor Books, 1979), 126.
14. Ibid.
15. Mannheim, 15.
16. William Kessen, The Child (New York: Wiley and Sons, 1965) 117.
17. Jean Jacques Rousseau, Emile (1762), translated by Barbara Roxley (London: Dent and Sons, 1911), 69.
18. John Locke, "Some Thoughts Concerning Education," (1693) in James L. Axtell, editor, The Educational Writings of John Locke (London: Cambridge University Press, 1968).
19. See Arlene Skolnick, Rethinking Childhood and J. H. van den Berg.
20. Guy R. Lafrançois, Of Children (Belmont: Wadsworth Publishers, 1973).
21. Kessen, 75.

## Chapter III. THE SEARCH FOR UNDERSTANDING: THE RISE OF THE HERMENEUTIC TRADITION AND THE QUESTION OF METHOD IN LIFE-WORLD RESEARCH

1. For this discussion of the history of the hermeneutic tradition I am very much indebted to Richard Palmer's excellent survey, Hermeneutics (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1969). In limiting the exploration by and large to an examination of Schleiermacher, Dilthey, Heidegger and Gadamer, I preserve Palmer's particular identification of the central figures. Since the publication of his volume in 1969, however, the literature dealing with the possibilities of hermeneutics for human science research has burgeoned. A good recent compendium of important articles has been edited by Paul Rabinow and William M. Sullivan in Interpretive Social Science: A Reader (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979).

Notably absent from the discussion in this chapter is reference to Paul Ricoeur. This is because, by and large, Ricoeur's contribution to the field lies outside the tradition of ontological hermeneutics with which we are primarily interested. But his absence is regrettable insofar as Ricoeur may be one of the most important writers to open the question of a genuinely cultural hermeneutic and to articulate the relationship between hermeneutic inquiry and the critique of ideology. His article "Ethics and Culture" in Philosophy Today (Summer, 1973), provides an excellent discussion of the charge of critical philosophy in general and the Frankfurt School in particular that hermeneutic reflection is powerless in itself to effect political and social reform. Ricoeur draws attention to the hermeneutical insight that any social/political change must be linguistically mediated, whereas critical philosophy (Habermas, Marcuse, Horkheimer, etc.) works essentially from a Kantian position, arguing a priori from visions of ideal community and communicative competence, visions which do not necessarily give due weight to the inevitability of linguistic tradition being present in any human future. Some of Ricoeur's most important articles have been recently published in John B. Thompson, translator and editor, *Paul Ricoeur: Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1982).

Other writers in this debate, set most lucidly in the ongooing conversations between Gadamer and Habermas, are Jack Mendelson, "The Habermas-Gadamer Debate" in *New German Critique*, Number 18 (Fall, 1979); Dieter Misgeld, "Critical Theory and Hermeneutics" in John O'Neill, editor, *On Critical Theory* (New York: Seabury, 1976); and Thomas McCarthy, "Language, Hermeneutics, and the Critique of Ideology" in *The Critical Theory of Jürgen Habermas* (Cambridge: The M.I.T. Press, 1981), 162-193.

The lack of a critical dimension in a study such as this leaves the work open to charges of blindness regarding such matters as class prejudices in child-rearing practices, the influence of social conditions on forms of adult reflection concerning children, etc. There is not space here to adequately deal with such charges except to assume a continuing modesty with respect to the claims of the study--a quality perfectly in keeping with the essential spirit of the hermeneutic enterprise.

2. Wilhelm Dilthey, *Gesammelte Schriften* (Gottingen: Vanderboeck and Ruprecht, 1913-1967), 1, 255. In Jürgen Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests*, translated by Jeremey J. Shapiro (Boston: Beacon Press, 1971), 164.

3. Martin Heidegger, *On the Way to Language* (1959), translated by Peter D. Hertz and Joan Stambaugh (New York: Harper and Row, 1971), 37.

4. Hans-Georg Gadamer, "On the Scope and Function of Hermeneutical Reflection," translated by B. G. Hess and R. E. Palmer in H-G. Gadamer, *Philosophical Hermeneutics*, translated and edited by David E. Linge (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979), 18.

5. Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 43.

6. Wilhelm Dilthey documents the development of the hermeneutic tradition to the nineteenth century in *Gesammelte Schriften*, 5 (B. G. Teutner: Leipzig and Berlin, 1923). An excerpt of this, entitled "The Rise of Hermeneutics", translated by Thomas Hall, can be found in Paul Connerton, editor, *Critical Sociology* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1978), 104-116. In the following discussion of Flacius and Schleiermacher, I draw in large measure from this source.

7. Matthias Illyricus Flacius, *Clavis Scripturae Sacrae* (Tübingen: Bleich, 1567).

8. See Heinz Kimmerle's article on Schleiermacher, "Hermeneutical Theory or Ontological Hermeneutics" in Robert W. Funk and Gerhard Ebehling, editors, *History and Hermeneutic*,

Journal of Theology and Church Series, IV (New York: Harper, 1967), 107-121.

9. Dilthey, Gesammelte, 5, 123., Connerton, 111.

10. Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, Phänomenologie des Geistes (1807), translated by J. B. Baillie as Phenomenology of Mind (London: Oxford University Press, 1931).

11. Leopold von Ranke, Sammtliche Werke, 54 vol., (1867-90). For the best biliographical approach, and a list of English translations, see Theodore H. von Laue, Leopold Ranke, The Formative Years (London: Oxford University Press, 1950).

12. Another more recent exploration of interpretation issues in the reading of Plato is Eric Alfred Havelock's Preface to Plato (Oxford: Blackwells, 1963).

13. Much has been made in recent hermeneutic scholarship of the "hermeneutic circle" in understanding. One of the better works on the subject is David Couzens Hoy, The Critical Circle: Literature, History and Philosophical Hermeneutics (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978).

14. The best introduction to Dilthey in English remains H. A. Hodges, Wilhelm Dilthey: An Introduction (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul (1944, 1969).

15. Wilhelm Dilthey, Gesammelte Schriften, 6, 126, translated and quoted by Richard Ermarth in Wilhelm Dilthey: The Critique of Historical Reason (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), 249.

16. Palmer, 99.

17. Gesammelte Schriften, 6, 239., Ermarth, 16.

18. Ibid., 8, 78., Ermarth, 17.

19. H. P. Rickman, W. Dilthey: Selected Writings (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 101.

20. Rickman, 1-33.

21. Gesammelte Schriften, 7, 86, in H. A. Hodges, The Philosophy of Wilhelm Dilthey (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1952), 249. This work of Hodges' should not be confused with the earlier (1949) and much shorter Introduction cited previously (see note 13).

22. Hodges, (1952), 38-40.

23. Dilthey, Gesammelte Schriften, 6, 317., Palmer, 109.

24. Gadamer, Truth and Method, 305-344.

25. Jürgen Habermas, "Historical Materialism and the Development of Normative Structures," in Communication and the Evolution of Society (Boston; Little Brown, 1979), 95-129.

26. See Rudolf Makkreel's discussion of Dilthey's concept of temporality: "Hermeneutics and Historical Understanding" in Makkreel, Dilthey: Philosopher of the Human Sciences (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975), 247-272.

27. Dilthey, Gesammelte Schriften, 7, 322 Palmer, 114.

28. Gesammelte Schriften, 7, 146-47., Ermarth, 278.

29. For a fuller discussion of "understanding" (Verstehen), see Michael Ermarth's excellent exposition "The Theory and Practice of Verstehen: Hermeneutic Understanding and History," in Ermarth, 241-322.

30. Gesammelte Schriften, 5, 144., Palmer, 115.

31. Ibid, 7, 236., Ermarth, 246.

32. Ibid.

33. Ibid, 7, 255., Ermarth, 257.

34. Descartes, Discourse, 73.

35. Hermann Tennessen, Martin Heidegger's Being and Time (Edmonton: University of Alberta, No date), 6.

36. For an excellent introduction to Heidegger, see George Steiner, Martin Heidegger (New York: Viking Press, 1979). For a sample of critical essays concerning Heidegger's influence on modern thought, refer to Michael Murray, editor, Heidegger and Modern Philosophy (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1978). See also Richard Palmer's lucid exposition in Hermeneutics, 124-161.

37. Palmer, 130-131.

38. In particular: "On the Essence of Truth," translated by R. F. C. Hull and Alan Crick in Martin Heidegger, Existence and Being, edited by Werner Brock (Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1949); The Question of Being, translated by William Kluback and Jean T. Wilde (New York: Twayne, 1958); Discourse on Thinking, translated by John M. Anderson and E. Hans Freund (New York: Harper and Row, 1966).

39. "Plato's Doctrine of Truth," translated by John Barlow in William Barrett and Henry D. Aiken, editors, Philosophy in the Twentieth Century (New York: Random House, 1962).

40. Martin Heidegger, Being and Time, translated by John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (New York: Harper and Row, 1962), 49-62. Originally published as Sein und Zeit (Halle: Niemeyr, 1927).

41. Being and Time, 51.

42. Edmund Husserl, Cartesian Meditations, translated by Dorion Cairns (The Hague: M. Nijoff, 1960).

43. Palmer, 129.

44. Being and Time, Part One, Sections III and IV.

45. Introduction to Metaphysics.

46. Being and Time, 154.

47. W. B. Macomber takes this theme of breakdown as the fundamental organizing principle of Heidegger's thought. See W. B. Macomber, The Anatomy of Disillusion (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1967).

48. Martin Heidegger, An Introduction to Metaphysics, translated by Ralph Mannheim (New Haven: Yale University Press (1959), third printing 1964). Originally published in German as Einführung in die Metaphysik, 1953).

49. Introduction to Metaphysics, 139.

50. Ibid., 82.

51. Ibid., 13.

52. Ibid., 82.

53. Palmer, 134.

54. Ibid.

55. Being and Time, 135.

56. Hans-Georg Gadamer, Wahrheit und Methode (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1960). References here are to the Second

English edition Truth and Method (see note 3 for Chapter I).

57. Ibid., 318.
58. Ibid., 319.
59. Ibid., 320.
60. Ibid., 321.
61. Ibid.
62. This is the term Glen-Doepel uses to translate the German wirkungsgeschichtliches Bewisstsein.
63. Martin Buber, I and Thou (New York: Scribners, 1958).
64. Hoy, 62.
65. Truth and Method, 321-325.
66. Ibid., 322.
67. Ibid., 323.
68. Ibid., 324.
69. Ibid.
70. For a full treatment of "effective historical consciousness" see Truth and Method, 305-34.
71. Ibid., 325.

## Chapter IV. APPROACHING RESEARCH IN THE HUMAN LIFE-WORLD HERMENEUTICALLY

1. Alfred North Whitehead, Science and the Modern World; Process and Reality (1929)(New York: Humanities Press, 1955).
2. Michael Polanyi, Personal Knowledge (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962); Science, Faith and Society (London: University of Chicago Press, 1969).
3. Thomas Kuhn, The Structure of Scientific Revolutions (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970).
4. Fritjof Capra, The Tao of Physics (Berkeley: Shaubhala, 19750.
5. Robert Nisbet, "Sociology as an Art Form," Pacific Sociological Review, 5, number 2 (Fall, 1962): 67-74.
6. Paul Ricoeur, "Ethics and Culture," Philosophy Today (Summer 1973): 212-225.
7. Anthony Giddens discusses social science research as a moral exercise in New Rules of Sociological Method (London: Hutchinson and Company, 1976): "theories produced in the social sciences are not just 'meaning frames' in their own right, but also constitute moral interventions in social life whose conditions of existence they seek to clarify," 9.
8. George Steiner, "The House of Being," Times Literary Supplement (October 9, 1981): 1144.
9. Heidegger discusses fully the Care of Dasein in Being and Time, Part One, section vi.
10. Truth and Method, 288.
11. Ibid., 404.
12. Ibid., 340.
13. Ibid., 345.
14. Ibid., 341.
15. Manuals for methods of interviewing in social science research, questioning techniques in teaching, etc., are legion. One well developed example is Michigan University,

Survey Research Centre, Interviewer's Manual (Ann Arbour: University of Michigan, 1976).

16. Introduction to Metaphysics, 143.

17. Heidegger, "Letter on Humanism" (1947), translated by Frank A. Capuzzi in collaboration with J. Glenn Gray, in Martin Heidegger: Basic Writings, edited by David Farrell Krell (New York: Harper and Row, 1977), 210.

18. Truth and Method, 327.

19. Ibid., 326.

20. Ibid., 327.

21. Ibid., 329.

22. Ibid., 330.

23. Ibid.

24. Ibid.

25. Ibid., 331.

26. Ibid.

27. Ibid.

28. Transcript, Appendix A--particularly lines

29. Ibid., line

30. An example of this comes after line

31. Truth and Method, 340.

32. Ibid., 353.

33. G. F. Hegel, Die Vernunft in der Geschichte in Truth and Method, 353.

34. Truth and Method, 354.

35. Ibid., 356.

36. Ibid., 444.

37. Marion Lundy Dobbert, Ethnographic Research: Theory and Application for Modern Schools and Society (New York: Praeger, 1982).

38. Barney G. Glaser and Anselm Strauss, The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research (Chicago: Aldine, 1967).

39. See Moses I. Finley's discussion of historicism in The Use and Abuse of History (London: Chatto and Windus, 1974).

40. "Religious and Poetical Speaking," Boston University Studies in Philosophy and Religion, volume 1, Leroy S. Rouner, General Editor (Notre Dame and London: University of Notre Dame Press, 1980).

41. Ibid., 92, 93.

42. Ibid., 92.

43. Ibid., 93.

44. Truth and Method, 355.

45. Ibid., 354.

46. Ibid., 416.

47. Ibid., 427.

48. Plato, Works, translated by Harold North Fowler (London: Heinemann, 1947), volume 1, Letter VII

## Chapter VI. OF WHAT DOES THE LANGUAGE OF LIVING WITH CHILDREN SPEAK?

1. Truth and Method, 355.

2. Ibid., 427.
3. Plato, Letter VII, 341c, 344c, and Phaedrus, 275.
4. Ralph Waldo Emerson, The Conduct of Life (Boston: Tickner and Fields, 1860).
5. This is a dimension that Pierre Erny discusses more fully in the context of the African experience of childhood. See Pierre Erny, Childhood and Cosmos (New York: New Perspectives, 1973).
6. Swiss psychiatrist and philosopher, Paul Tournier has written eloquently on the phenomenology of "place" in A Place for You (London: SCM Press, 1968).
7. Amedeo Giorgi has been very influential in the estabIsihment of formal procedures for analysing phenomenologically conversational and descriptive data. See A. Giorgi, "An Application of Phenomenological Method in Psychology," in A. Giorgi, C. T. Fisher, and E. Murray, Duquesne Studies in Phenomenological Psychology, vol. 1, 2 (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1975).

Chapter VII. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

1. The Erosion of Childhood, 8.
2. This is Philippe Aries' main thesis in Centuries of Childhood, 99.
3. This thesis, 148.
4. Ibid., 133.
5. Ibid., 126.
6. Ibid., 27.
7. Ibid., 178.
8. Ibid.
9. Ibid.
10. Ibid., 137.
11. Ibid., 191.
12. Ibid., 107.
13. Ibid.
14. Ibid., 126.
15. Quoted by Suransky, 201.
16. Ibid., 167.
17. Ibid., 184.
18. Ibid., 137, 153, 175, 184, 211.
19. Ibid., 152.
20. Edith Cobb, The Ecology of Imagination in Childhood (New York: Columbia University Press, 1977), 109.
21. The Gospel According to Mark, chapter 10, verse 15.
22. Thesis, 147.
23. Pierre Erny's Childhood and Cosmos, though heavily Jungian, is still one of the best examples of the kind of theorizing valued here.
24. Gadamer, Truth and Method, 412.
25.
26. See Gadamer, "Play as the Clue to Ontolgical Explanation" in Truth and Method, 91-119.

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# APPENDIX A

# A HERMENEUTIC CONVERSATION WITH A MOTHER OF TWO TEENAGE CHILDREN, AND SOME REFLECTIONS ON HERMENEUTIC PROCESS

What follows is provided as an example of how a hermeneutic conversation might possibly transpire. It is a transcript of a conversation held between the writer and one mother, Jill, during a pilot study done in 1979 in which the writer was attempting to 'hear' what adults had to say about their experience of living with children. At the conclusion of the transcript some hermeneutical reflections are made which try to speak beyond the speech.

Jill is a woman in her mid-forties, and the mother of two teenage daughters. The fact that she is university educated, living a relatively comfortable middle-class life in a happy marriage with a 'healthy' relationship with her children, raises no question as to her 'representativeness.' Her 'representativeness' is not the issue. What we are after is a revealing and a speaking of her experience.

Line

D: Jill, could you tell me a bit about what it's like
having children. You have two girls, don't you,
one in late teens, one in early teens?

J: In the relationship of a parent to child there's a
whole lot involved, because I feel that though in
the relationship the parents start off as two separate
individuals, and you're husband and wife,
when you have a child or more than one child, and
you develop this relationship (with the child),
all the things that go with that relationship then

go back to the parents, and change the parents and they become different people. They're very different people than if they hadn't allowed themselves to be involved in that relationship. It's a changing thing: like, I feel it's more of a changing thing for the parents--a growing thing more for the parents than for the children because I think they end up very different people than if they hadn't had those years of experience of living day to day trying to cope with maintaining their own identities and their own privacy, their responsibility of guiding these kids as they grow--and balance all the other influences that they get from all around today with the world we're living in today. Doing all *that* and having those kids maybe not always thinking and reacting and behaving the way you hope they will; and still loving them even though they're doing things that are horrible to you and not what you'd hoped they'd do. Doing all that--if you can come through having done all that and then sort of look at those kids in their late teens and say, "I'm really proud of the way they are as people", I think I'd feel quite successful. Parenting is a process.

Silence.

I know I started out with a totally unrealistic perception of parenthood and children. I had a lot of assumptions. Like, I thought that if you did all the right things, and provided a good home and environment, and did all the things you were supposed to do, then these children--well, they might misbehave socially once in a while or something, but they would generally turn out exactly like you. I didn't count on the genes being packed full with totally different input from all the combinations of all those generations. I didn't count on them as being really separate people. So my older daughter was a non-conformist type of child from birth. At first I felt disappointed about this because she wasn't fitting into the books' and my friends' ideas and my ideas about where she should be a certain stages. And as I look back it was all over very silly petty little things like wanting to choose her own clothes at a year and a half! And you know I felt I was losing control all the time, and that was a really important thing to me when I started out parenting--that I was in control: *always*! And then as this kid got older, and her younger sister came along, she was rearing her head even more, like "Hey, I'm my own person!" And until she was about 13 or 14, I was very concerned about her behaviour, because she was rebelling against everything that I had just conformed to myself as a child and taken for granted.

But my husband always had a lot more confidence in her than I did. Now he's a little older than I am and a little more experienced, and maybe he was a little more confident in himself, but he used to say to me things like this: "Don't worry about Janie. She will only go on an elastic. She'll go as far as she can on her elastic and then she'll bounce back. She won't break that elastic. She's just reaching as far as she can to show that she's her own person. And it was true. She never did really go over that brink. But I used to be really scared that she was, maybe heading the wrong way. Because she was selecting friends that weren't in the community. She was bringing home down and outs. She was skipping school to go and visit some friend down in a poor area, because, she would explain after, she thought they needed her more there than, you know ... And all this didn't fit into the child who'd go to school and be happy and come home ... But anyway, I don't know ... where have I gotten.

D: We were talking about this notion of control.

J: Yes! That was a very important thing, that control. Well, it wasn't until I realized when she was about 14 that suddenly I wasn't going to have control; that this was another human being. I had to give up that control, and I had to look at her with more confidence, and trust any modelling we had done, as well as other people that she had been around. And let her start using some of her own control. And it wasn't until that point that I stepped out of her life, not literally, but, you know, I stepped back, and when something would come up I would say, "Well, you have to decide that" and then I had to live with the decision. And that was rough sometimes. But it wasn't till I stepped back that she realized that I valued her as a person. Up until then what she was really rebelling at, I think, was the fact that I was wanting too much control. Now she's nearly 20, and she's everything that, if I had been able to look into a crystal ball, I would have wanted. But she had to tell me how to go about it. I thought what I was doing was just going to fit her into a mould, see, and she's not that type of person. Now she's into Social Work herself, see. (laugh)

So ... what happened to me as a parent in raising that child was certainly a growing experience for both of us as parents. Because if I had never had that experience, if I had never had that child, and gone through all the joys and tears and good moments too, I don't know what I would've been like now. I would have been different. If I had not had children I would definitely be a different person. There have been moments when I've looked back and thought how much easier life would have been if I could have just eliminated all that (laugh)--stress ... But then there are some such good moments now--where she will say something and show that she's really come to herself and I think, "Oh! wow, that's really great." Yet it wouldn't have happened, I don't think, if she hadn't gone through that rocky time.

Then our younger daughter, Mary, is 16 and she was a very different type of child altogether. She didn't start showing her own thinking too much until just very recently. She's been much more of a conformist and so we've been trying to work at her being more independent (laugh). So that's caused a little stress, because we're trying to undo some of her rigidity that she'd gotten caught up in the school system, which would have pleased me with the first child, because control was so important. But I had changed, you see, by the time the second one had come along, so that what became important was her having her own ideas and her own independence.

So even with the second child, people say, "Well, isn't it strange how two kids in the same family can be so different!"--but I don't find that strange at all, because the parents are not the same people, they're not the same from the moment they say "I do"--if that's what they say today. (laugh) They're not the same people 30 seconds after. They're not the same a year later, or with that first child or the second, or at any other time in their lives. The parents are not the same people. So you can't really say, "And yet they (the two kids) have the same parents", because they didn't really. Like, if I had a child now, it would be a very different scene than with these two.

D: Let's get back to this notion of "People aren't the same the moment they say 'I do'."

J: I guess what I'm really saying is that it's the experiences that people have and the relationships that they have with other people are the really important things that determine how that person is growing and changing. Because as people are interacting, like, even as you and I are interacting --although it sounds more like a monologue (laugh) --we're not the same as we were yesterday. Like, I feel it's such an evolutionary thing, that we're part of this world, and we're just ongoing all the time. Nothing ever stays the same ... it's always changing.

D: You could try to keep it the same, I suppose. And I suppose that's where this business of control comes in. In other words, the child comes to you, is born to you, and you're constantly in that state of tension between wanting to keep it to yourself, and letting it go.

J: That's right!

D: Then it's only as you sort of live in that tension that life becomes a possibility ... If you choose either one of the extremes, like keeping it all to yourself, then you don't grow and neither does the child. If you take the other extreme and let it go completely--then you don't give the child a chance to change you, or yourself the chance to be changed. So it's like walking a tightrope.

J: It's walking that tightrope! I think you've really hit the nail on the head! That's one of the hardest things about being a parent, I think, is to walk that tightrope and end up with an independent adult as your child, that still loves you and you still have that relationship with. And I think that's just about the hardest thing to do. And it takes working at all the time.

D: Is it something you found yourself confronted with?

J: Oh, yes! When I would use control, I had moments of real fear that this might have affected the relationship. But you have to take chances, and you have to sort of know when to take a chance and when not to. You're in constant touch with them as people.

Silence

You know, come to think of it, I don't think I've ever really thought of children as being, like, I'm the adult and they're the child. I've never had that kind of power struggle feeling, like, it's been more, you know, they're just smaller people. (laugh) They're people too, just small physically. And I think in their own way, they have great needs to control what they can control too.

Silence

D: When did you first become aware of this sense of stopping to think about this tension between autonomy and freedom in relationship to your children?

J: I think when my oldest child was very young. If she had been quite a conformist type of baby, child, toddler, I probably wouldn't have come to that. But things were happening between us when she was a year and a half old that shouldn't have been happening. And I suddenly looked and saw that we had conflict as mother and baby, and ... why? Why did we have conflict? And ... I guess it's because of my nature--if a problem exists to think there must be a way of dealing with it. And I didn't like the conflict. I was disappointed because I hadn't allowed for conflict between mother and child or anything. And when I saw this starting, I thought, "Boy, I'd better see why, while she's still a year and a half." Then I really looked at her to see if she'd been switched (laugh) and I'd got the wrong baby, because she was so totally different from what I'd expected.

D: You actually checked at the hospital?

J: Actually, I did.

## Discussion

There are two ways in which this transcript can be considered. In the first sense, it shows glimpses of hermeneutic process at work in the interview as interview. In the second, it manifests the essentially hermeneutic way in which Jill establishes understanding with her child (children).

In the first instance the interviewer begins, not so much with a question, as with an invitation to speak, and an expression of a desire to hear what the other person has to say. Jill begins with abstracted statements of experience; i.e., reflective experience, and continues (to line 34) ending with the universal "Parenting is a process." At this point there is silence, but then out of the silence emerges the personal being, so to speak, of the subject reflected in personal speech (beginning line 35 and continuing, until line 64 ). In lines 204, 203, the interviewer shows his interest in what the subject has said by asking to go back to a previous statement, but he manifests his own abstractive tendencies by putting his comment in abstract terms, and this evokes further abstraction from the subject and (hence?) a minimum of conversation. Both interviewer and subject become theorizers at this point and 'raw' experience is shut out. In line 217 the inverviewer tries to extend what the subject has said by putting the preceding conceptualization in a different way and in personal terms. The subject responds enthusiastically: "That's right!" (line 217) which in turn encourages the interviewer to push on in the hope that something significant is being touched and possibly 'nudged' into disclosure. He describes tentatively the possibility that, for Jill, living with children is "like walking a tightrope" (line 231) at which point the subject responded vigorously: "It's walking that tightrope!" A sense of deep understanding occurs between interviewer and Jill at this point in mutual acknowledgement that experience has been brought from a certain hiddenness into openness through speech. Again the silence after line 246 elicits more personal utterances. The silence after line 255 brings forth 'nothing' so the interviewer tries a different tack which in turn elicits further disclosure.

The second way of considering the transcript has to do with what it is that is being disclosed in the interview; namely, the way in which the understanding of children for Jill shows itself. Again, we can see the hermeneutic nature of her understanding, as it is revealed through the concreteness of experience; through the living historicality of that concreteness; and through what Gadamer calls "negativity" or awareness of finitude which in turn renders one available to new disclosure.

In her opening remarks (lines 5 ff.) Jill speaks in a reflective way of the dialecticality of her experience.

Parents, she says, start off as two individuals in a relationship, but when a child comes, or children, the parents become essentially different people, they are changed by the experience. At the same time, however, they have to "allow" (her word, line 13) themselves to be changed. So understanding her children is for Jill something that has to be "allowed", implying that there is indeed something to be allowed, some message to be 'let in.' For Jill the message comes in the context of 'coming up against a wall' (to use Heidegger's term) with her first child (Janie). The 'coming up against it' was experienced through concrete historical situations when, for example, Janie was "wanting to choose her own clothes at a year and a half!" (line 53); "bringing home down and outs" (line 79); and "skipping school" (line 79). Yet the moments of 'coming up against' Janie bring Jill into an opening of her own need for control, and that in her negativity, the daughter was simply asking for control of her own, pleading to be 'let in', or we should say, pleading to be 'let out' in order to be 'let in.' When Jill realizes that she "had to give up control" (line 91), when she "steps back" (line 96), then the daughter "realized I (Jill) valued her as a person" and understanding between the two emerges. Now Janie is "everything ... I could have wanted" (lines 105, 106), but "she (Janie) had to tell me how to go about it" (line 107). So at first Jill thought, as parent, that she was "just going to fit her (Janie) into a mould" (line 109)--Gadamer's dogmatist personified--but such an attitude shut out the child's own disclosure which, however, continually pressed at different times and places for acknowledgement until Jill "allowed" her to "show ... herself" (line 129). And now she is able to say "Oh, wow, that's really great" (line 126). Yet "it (Janie's disclosure) wouldn't have happened ... if she (Janie) hadn't gone through that rocky time" (line 127, 128), or, Jill might have said, "if I hadn't gone through that rocky time with her.

In the interview, then, we see the nature of understanding between parent and child as essentially dialectical, constantly engaging each of the acts or in a struggle for disclosure. Such understanding works itself out in concrete situations in time and space yet is never final, never complete. Understanding as such is a living sense which becomes possible when each 'party' allows the other to speak of their own being. But such 'allowing' is no easy matter. It forever challenges the closedness of fixed opinions and taken-for-granted beliefs. In other interviews in the same series, understanding between parents and children had at times broken down or was rendered impossible by the refusal of the partners to see conflict as being of the essence for understanding; that is, to see adversity, not as a liability, but as a message that speaks of the limitedness of present taken-for-granted understanding. From a hermeneutical research point of view, though, such breakdown in understanding is of vital interest, for in its very negativity it points to directions where a deeper understanding of 'understanding' may be found.

# APPENDIX B

## MAXINE: AN UNMARRIED, PREGNANT TEENAGER

| | | First Reflections |
|---|---|---|
| D: | Why don't we just start with some formal things. Could you tell me how old you are, where you come from, just a little bit about yourself. | |
| M: | OK. Um, I'm 16. I just turned 16 in September. And--I don't really come from anywhere. I come from Vancouver--sort of, last year. And then the past year I've been living in Victoria, and Langley and Prince George. And then I came here for four months. Then I went back to ... then I lived in Saskatoon, too, for a month. Then I went back to Vancouver for a month this Christmans, and then I came back here. I've been living at Elm Grove since. | Begins with very off-hand, flippant speech; surface boldness<br>Lived there<br>Came here<br>Lived there<br>Went back<br>Came back here |
| D: | Oh, I see. Were you with your family when you were moving? | |
| M: | No, I was by myself. | |
| D: | I see. (Silence) We don't need to be worried about silences, because if we're silent, it's only because I was thinking about what you were saying. Or you may be thinking of something to say. (Pause) I think you mentioned when we were speaking before (as a group) that you were three month pregnant before you discovered you were pregnant? Is that right? | Softly posed questions |
| M: | Well, ya/no. When I found out I was pregnant, I was 6-8 weeks pregnant. And then when I found out about this place I was three months pregnant. And then I didn't come here until I was 5½ months pregnant.<br>(Pause) | Softer response |
| D: | Can you tell me a little about how and when you found out--or is that too personal? | |
| M: | No, that's OK. I don't know--when I found out for sure I already knew for sure. It was really weird, because as | Quieter speech, sense of trust emerging |

soon as I, I, did it, you know, I thought, you .... So I was worried about it, and I worried and worried and worried, and then I went to the doctor, and I was really worried and I was just sittin' there in the doctor's office, out in the waiting room, and there was this other girl. And I kind of figured she was in there for the same thing because her boyfriend was with her, right. And we both had to go down for the test at the same time. Then we came back up to the doctor's office at the same time. And she went in first--the doctor called her in--and they didn't even go in. All I saw was, you know, 'No', it turned out negative. And she just said that, then the girl left. And then the doctor called me in and I was just hopin' that he would say it was negative. But she said, "Come in and sit down", and I just knew it. It didn't really bother me though.

Sexual activity as unmentionable

Worry--"It was kind of weird"

Comparing experience with another

Hoping pregnancy wasn't a fact

Smothering of anxiety

D: You went alone to the hospital did you?

M: Ya.

D: You seem like a very independent kind of person.

M: Well, I haven't been living with my parents for about a year.

Separated from nuclear family

D: Oh, I see.

M: My boyfriend, he's in Saskatoon, so ... I sort of had to go by myself.

D: Oh, I see. You said that you weren't sort of expecting to become pregnant, but you kind of knew that it was possible.

M: I knew that I was pregnant. Like I knew that I should get pregnant, because like I didn't use anything, he didn't use anything, and I just kind of figured ....

Knowing one is pregnant

D: Had you thought of that before you made love?

M: No (laugh) you don't think of those things right then. You think of it after.

D: So you sort of ....

M: Got carried away. (laugh)

Laughing away seriousness

D: Could you tell me a bit about the time between finding out and the three months since then, of the kinds of things you've had to deal with as a person, having a child within you.

M: Well, when I first found out, the first thing I thought of was getting an abortion, because it was a quick way out. You know, you go into the hospital one day and you come out and it's over. And I would have gone through with it, but I was talking to my aunt about it--my aunt lives here in Petersburg--I was talking to her about it. And I told her I was going to get an abortion, and she's really Catholic, she's really religious, and I think it's against her religion or something to have an abortion. So she goes, "Well, I think you should go talk to a counsellor". And I said I didn't want to but I thought it would make her happy (laugh) so I said, "As long as it's nobody from Birthright", because ....

Wanting a way out

Family influence--tradition

'Child' wanting to please adult

D: Because that's a Catholic organization?

M: Ya (laugh) and they're totally against it, right, and I said, "Nobody from Birthright ... I'll go talk to a counsellor, so maybe she can straighten me out, help me, you know, decide for sure." And my aunt said she'd make me an appointment. She made me an appointment with this lady named Anne, and it wasn't till I got over there that I found out that she was from Birthright. And she showed me pictures and everything, and it was really gross. So I decided not to. I decided just to go through with the nine months. And I've been happy about it since. Like I mean--people who can't have kids, they wait three years, just to get a little baby. And if I can give them a little baby where it can get lots of love, I think that's great. I'm glad that I didn't get an abortion. I don't think I could have handled it. And living in a place like this (Elm Grove) really helps.

Self-assessment of personal twistedness in this condition

Confronting physical realities

Coming to terms by redeeming the act

D: You have a lot of people who can support you. You're not alone, I suppose ....

M: Ya. (laugh) You know you're not alone in a place like this!

(long pause)

Waiting for topicality

D: So you made the decision to keep the child--surrender it, pardon me--but that means you took the responsibility for bringing it to birth. Can you tell me a little about that?

(Knock on door. Supervisor checks to see if everything's OK)

M: What do you mean?

D: About what it's like for you to be bearing a child. Do you have the feeling of something young growing inside you?

Hesitant questioning; searching for a way of opening the subject

M: Not really. I don't even feel pregnant right now (laugh). I don't know. I don't really know. Like it hasn't really hit me yet--like I haven't got really big like the other girls. Like I can still go out, and go to parties and that, you know. And it hasn't really hit me yet that I'm pregnant and that I'm goin' to be having to sit around at home with this kid inside me not going out with anyone. So it hasn't really hit me in that way.

Truly feeling pregnant carries a sense of re-orientation to the world

D: You're due in April--that's only three months away. How have you sort of felt about yourself as a result of becoming involved in this. Was it really hard at first?

M: It wasn't hard. (pause)

D: I mean, did you feel, "Oh, my God, this is terrible!" or did you think, "Oh, well, this has happened."

M: I just thought, "It's happened." It's my own fault. I knew damn well that it could happen. But I just figure now that it's happened, it's happened. If I can give some couple a baby that they've been waiting for, I don't think it's that bad.

I think it's really good actually that a girl, if she gets pregnant, she gets into trouble--that she can give up her baby and know that it goes to a good home, you know, she doesn't have to worry about it for the rest of her life. I think it's good. I don't get depressed at all, half the time. I get depressed when I can't travel around anymore. I got to watch myself. Like I can't go jogging. If I wasn't pregnant, I'd go jogging. But I can't go jogging because it's icy and I might fall. I've got a responsibility. I've got to look after this kid. I can't play sports. I can't do what I usually do. But it's just nine months, you know. It's not that long when you think about it. You've got fifty years after ....

Becoming pregnant as getting into trouble, giving the child up as a positive act which redeems the trouble

Being pregnant disrupts the sense of the usual

Looking to the future

D: Do you look forward to doing those things when your term is complete?

M: Oh, ya.

D: When we were talking as a group, we just touched briefly on yourselves as participating .... In other words do you see this as happening to a lot of girls in society today? Do you see it as increasing?

M: Oh, ya. It's gettin' worse and worse. Like half my friends have babies. Half my friends have kids, have had abortions, or have given up their kids. You know, it's just something that happens every day. I'm not the first and I'm not going to be the last. It's just part of life that you've got to accept.

Teenage pregnancy as something "getting worse"

Jocular air

Fatalism

D: How has it come about that more girls ....

M: More and more girls are getting pregnant?

D: Ya, apart from the obvious reasons.

M: You find it hard to talk, don't you? (laugh)

D: Well, I'm very conscious of not wanting to do violence to your opinions.

M: Well, no, don't worry about that .... It's because 20 years ago, girls didn't go out with guys until they were 16. And now girls go out with guys when they're 12. At 12 you've got the extra 4 years there before more/most girls have gone out with boys. And then everybody else--there's so many forms of birth control that everybody's right into sex, right, and then some girls, because all the other girls are getting right into sex, they just think it's the thing for me to do too. And they don't think about birth control, and then it happens. But 20 years ago, morals were a lot stronger. It was really considered a sin to have sex before you were married. But now, like I figure if you enjoy it, you just do it. And that's the way a lot of girls think and that's why a lot of girls end up in trouble.

Birth control enables a "getting right into sex"

Knowing about birth control but not thinking about it

Former morality seen as "lost", contemporary morality based on "enjoyment" which ends in trouble

D: Do people find it's as good as they expect? Like, sometimes I wonder if, in society at large, there's a great pressure on people to get involved sexually at an early age, and it's sort of put up as a great thing, it's fantastic, but in actual experience there's a lot more to it than people had told them, or ....

M: Ya, well, when I did it the first time, like I didn't think it was that great. Like I thought it was awful. Like it wasn't really awful, but I felt really bad afterwards. And it sure doesn't ... it's sure not like the second or third time. But it's not everything it's built up to be. But, you know, you have it once and you just enjoy it. And that's just what happened to me. I love it. Like I was on birth control pills for a while--I was living with my boyfriend for a while so I had to. And then I moved out and I just figured I didn't need them anymore. And I was kind of broke so I couldn't afford to go and get the prescription no more, and I felt I didn't need it. And then that one stupid time (laugh), I just needed them and I wasn't on it.

Emphasis on "love it"

Why would that time be considered "stupid"?

(Silence)

Silence as waiting for topicality

D: Do you have plans for when you've finished here?

M: Oh ya, I've got lots of plans. Like this place is, like what I really want is to get through school and get a really good job where I can travel. And I quit school for a little while because I was having problems at home and I was travelling around looking for a place where I could settle down and try and make it on my own, going back to school. And it finally worked out. I moved in with my aunt in Petersburg here. Then I found out I was pregnant, and there screwed school again. But I came here and they put me up to Grade 10 and I'd only had my 9th grade--I hadn't finished my 9th grade. They put me up to 10 in Correspondence and, you know, I'm really workin' on it. By the time ....

Having plans
Get through school

Travel

Look for a place to settle

Value of relatives

"Screwing" school

D: Oh, I see, so you have the chance to do your school work here.

M: Oh ya! And by the time I get out of here I'll have finished my grade 10, hopefully. And then I'm going to go back to school and work my butt off, finish my high school, and then I'm going to try to get into a career.

D: What kind of thing would you like to do?

M: Well, my parents both work in the airlines. And the travel privileges they get--like, I mean, next weekend my dad's going to Mexico for three days--just to get some sun. He's leaving Thursday, coming back Saturday. And then Saturday morning my mom's going to find somewhere to go to try to get some sun. I mean, I think it's so nice to do that.

Tone of pride in talking about own parents

Curious of their lifestyle

D: You mean they just hop on a plane.

M: Ya.

D: Are they living in Vancouver?

M: Ya. And that's just what I'd like to be able to do. Like, if I worked in an airport as a ticket agent, it's nothing like you have to train for years to do--like a pilot or something. And it's something where you can meet people and you get all the travel privileges and everything. It's great.

Wanting to meet people

D: You seem to like travelling--see the world ....

M: I've already seen the world. (chuckle)

D: Oh, have you? In what way?

M: I've travelled with my folks for quite a while. But I was so young. I could have met some of the people. But I figure that when I'm 18 and a ticket agent or something, I can do my travelling and party for a while in each country, and I can find out what it's like in each of those countries. I think that's pretty neat. I want to go places.

Age is a relative matter

Wanting to go places

## JOHN: A RECENT FATHER

| | | First Reflections |
|---|---|---|
| D: | Perhaps we can begin, John, by talking a bit about your experience of what it was like having children. And I suppose that involves things like the decision or the circumstances under which you found out that you were having children, and then we can talk a bit about the pregnancy itself. Your mutual expectancy with your wife or girl friend or whatever and the birth itself and then just briefly after that. | Innocently posed questions, unaware of what is to come |
| J: | Well, the first situation was one in which my present wife--then girl friend--and I had known each other, I guess about 2½ years and had pretty well been in an exclusive relationship, I suppose you might say. But there was some confusion on our parts to what our futures were to be in terms of whether we should be married or in different parts of the world, or what--we weren't really certain, we were both going to university and at one point in time--I guess it was the spring of both our graduating years, that there was a discovery made--a rather shocking one, I suppose that was. | Slow, deliberate, calculated speech throughout<br>Begins with a huge sigh<br>Uncertainty in relationship<br>Pregnancy as shocking "discovery" |
| D: | Were you living together at the time? | |
| J: | No. We were both living at home, in fact in our respective parents and families. So at this discovery there was great alarm and confusion and some very unfortunate feelings, I think--uncertainties, even at that point--of whether we would remain together. Unfortunately it happened at a point in time when our relationship was such that it may not have lasted too much longer. Then this event came along. In fact I had tickets to go to New Zealand. So anyway, there were some very difficult times, and some changes and decisions going on that made it virtually pure hell for both of us. But what eventually turned out was the decision to be married and, but at this point it was several months after the pregnancy had been discovered, so that | Discovery of pregnancy brings alarm, confusion<br>Raises questions about staying together<br>Pregnancy as event which "comes along" and interrupts plans |

we felt that we might as well wait until after the child was born and get married then. And that's what happened.

Now apart from that whole marriage situation, I'll relate to how I felt about the birth itself, and what it was. Well, I anticipated, I suppose, a boy being born, and having through (not terribly closely or intimately) the births of many children, from my mother's and father's experience--I was the earliest of ten--infants were certainly no surprise to me, nothing new. And as they had always been, there was something very special. And now to have my own, was a great thrill, really. It was perhaps something I didn't sit down and really ponder over intellectually, but was definitely an emotional event, more so than an intellectual one, and first sight of my son was one of total involvement and total excitement, I suppose, an awe. I just stared and smiled and looked for a long time and it brought a lot of, I suppose, reality to the forefront. It made a lot of things perhaps a little more meaningful, but as I say, not again in an intellectual sense at the time.

Anticipation of sex of child based on own parents' experience

Memory of children as special

Birth of a child not an intellectual event--awe, excitement, staring, smiling

Children bring reality to the forefront, make things more meaningful

D: Could we try to get inside that a bit ....

J: Sure. I think the feeling that in a very real sense something of myself had been extended, and resulted in something brand new, something special. I suppose a feeling of great humility in having a part in such a process that is really a mysterious one, perhaps, the whole meaning of life, regeneration.

Child as extending oneself, creating something new

Child elicits humility, mystery, wholeness, regeneration

D: Could you talk about some of the experiences where you sensed that most strongly--that sense of the wonder, the mystery and the humility. What kinds of things triggered it in your mind? Would it just be when you saw him in a particular way--when he was sleeping, or when he'd just been home.

J: Yes, this was the first time I'd seen him, just hours after having him, and I suppose trying to empathize with this

Supposing about the newborn

creature that was a human being and had a mind and a soul and was sitting there oblivious to me and to most things, I suppose. I had this inevitable desire to reach out with my being to it--but to reach it--to reach this body.

Sense of newborn being oblivious
Desire to reach out to the newborn

D: Is that right? Did you touch him?

J: No.

D: But you had the desire to.

J: Yes, oh, very much. I've always had the desire to hold babies. But, I guess there was a real desire to communicate and to, I suppose, show my warmth toward him, my acceptance--and later I was able to hold him, and felt close to that ability to do that--I suppose, first of all, I'm a rather emotional person and particularly with children so that it was, I suppose, to not only my attempt at communicating with him, also a desire for communication from him or a reaction, a response.

A desire to communicate with and show acceptance of the newborn

Being emotional, not intellectual, with children

Desire of response from the newborn

D: You said that he brought a lot of reality to life.

J: I guess, partly ....

D: Is that in relationship to your wife and so on--your whole domestic situation?

J: Partly--but more I was thinking along the line of--creation of life and the re-creation of life, and what that means to me. It has great meaning. I, above all, don't feel that I'm here--that any of us are here--by chance. And so to witness this event, and another event of its kind, in which I have been a factor --direct factor--had very special meaning for me. Sort of, I suppose, in a sort of cliché-ish kind of way, part of the miracle, if you will. And it made me think of my own purpose here, my own future.

Children inspire a thinking about life

Being a direct factor in part of a miracle makes one think of one's own purpose and future

I suppose to that I must admit my mind is racing, all these things are kind of washing over, and over-lapping.

Memory as a washing over, an overlapping

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| D: | How did it transform your sense of purpose for the future? | |
| J: | Well, I think it brought home the fact that I was now a parent and was now to be looking at the world in slightly different terms. A responsibility, obviously, was involved, which had never been before, much greater than any had been before. So I think that perhaps it demanded more an attitude of maturity from --certainly a different dimension of maturity that .... | Children "bring home" facts about the world Children inspire a looking at the world differently; children bring new maturity to adults |
| D: | Have you ever resented that? | There seemed a hint of resentment in the voice |
| J: | No...I think that having lived with a large number of younger siblings, that kind of responsibility was not a shock to the system of any kind. | |
| D: | I want to talk a little more about the discovery of the pregnancy. In the context of the other interviews I've done, it's always been interesting how almost without exception (and I'm not trying to put an interpretation on your situation) people would say that it couldn't have happened at a worse time. | Change of direction in conversation |
| J: | Really! | |
| D: | That there was some sense of they "wanted children, but not now!" or "Why now?", this sort of thing. So, if we can focus in on that a bit--like your reaction, about when you first found out and .... That's pretty personal stuff but .... | Incompletion of question opens up topic |
| J: | I don't mind. Well, I suppose the first thing was not an announcement of the fact, it was an announcement of suspicion, by my wife, who was very distressed, and in tears, crying, very upset. So I tried to calm her down--"no sense fretting that much right now"; "it's just one of those things, and if you're sure, well, it has to be discussed, it has to be sorted out. If you're not, wait, calm down as much as you can, and hopefully, things will be resolved soon." So I had this dealing with her emotional reaction and I think was perhaps more concerned | Pregnancy announced as suspicion<br>Having to deal with spouse's reaction as well as one's own |

with hers than my own which was perhaps varied a bit. Certainly I was of the same feeling in that it certainly was something that we hadn't planned and was at an awkward time. I was in my fourth year of an honours programme and she was in her third year of a general programme. So certainly a knowledge of a possibility was a disturbing one for both of us. Then I guess it was 2-3 weeks later that we were informed that, indeed, she was pregnant and that then we had, of course, those types of decisions I was faced with at that point, where we were not married, and it had, unfortunately, as I mentioned, was to involve a reversal at that point. We had been heading towards a break-up, heading toward separation, so this brought ....

Pregnancy involves a reversal in direction of relationship

D: Was that discussed?

J: Oh, yeah, it had been. I had planned a trip to Australia and New Zealand with a very close friend, and it was a very important trip to me. At that stage of my life I felt it was time that I left home and family for a time, finished with studies and got out to travel which I had not had the opportunity for up to that point. So suddenly this reality was upon us, and although it didn't at any point--I was not ever wishing for that life to cease. And ....

Emphasis on "very important"

It sounds like he was wishing it

D: It just never entered your mind. Or it did enter your mind, I should imagine, but ....

J: It entered my mind certainly, but not from the point of view of the child's, I suppose, for instance. I was perhaps more concerned with my wife and her feelings at that point. She was so totally out of control at times that I was really, really worried and she--she came from a family where she was the only child, and in addition from a family which was not a very warm atmosphere. Her father--she didn't have her father any more, she had her step-father, and so it made it very very difficult.

Tolstoy: "No man is more solicitous of his wife's welfare than one secretly unfaithful"
Solicitous attitude toward wife

Sense of J. appealing to my understanding

D: Her parents were divorced, were they?

J: They had been, when she was very young, five, I believe. So the whole thing was a nightmare, in a nutshell, for the two of us, and--I was going back and forth, fluctuating between knowing that I would remain with this woman, and this child, but knowing more so now, I think--at that time I became more fully aware of what my wife's make-up, background were, as well as her mother. It was a great revelation to me by her mother at this point in time, and it wasn't a pleasant one. And so this in an unfortunate and great respect overshadowed my real reactions to conception of a child and the inevitability of a child being born.

Deep sighs throughout this speech

Presence of the child reveals basis of ambiguity and difference between spouses

D: Did you consider adoption at that point?

J: Yes, we had. But this would be during a period when I was convinced it wouldn't be a good idea to marry this particular lady, whereas when I had feelings that I should, that I would, certainly adoption was out of the question. So, it was an unfortunate vacillating back and forth, but ....

Pregnancy deepens vacillation about the relationship

D: This went on during the pregnancy?

J: Yes. And I certainly would never deny that it has affected more my wife's relationship with the child than my own.

D: In what sense?

J: In an acceptance of and relation to the child as something loved and cherished. There was a great deal of trauma and anguish involved, I suppose, more so on her part--her being a vehicle, I guess, and so that I think that she had more difficulty accepting the child than I did. But there's more to it than just that, because as I mentioned, the difference in our family background and the difference in the experience with children. She was totally inexperienced with children and she didn't really like kids, whereas I loved them and had 'been at it for years'. But the whole thing

J. is weeping while speaking

A child brings to the surface memories of one's own childhood boiled down to a situation where it was going to be tough for my wife to accept fully this child, that had been a source of a great deal of emotional pain. And it's borne out over the years since then. She's had great difficulty in, I suppose, forming (voice breaking) contact with the child and relating to it on a very deeply warm basis. There've been some real problems.

Difficulty of accepting a child who brings attention to one's own emotional pain

Intuitive fears confirmed

D: So it puts you, sort of, in a role of kind of a compensation in which you try to compensate for that warm relationship.

Trying to focus the intuited direction of previous speech

J: Yes, yes. There were some other strange things coming into the picture, because due to the nature of my wife's 'condition'--I use that term perhaps loosely--but coming through a family such as hers, was one of great tension, a lot of bitterness on the part of her mother for years and years and open hostility on a regular basis, almost a perpetual basis, in fact. I was finding myself up against a situation where I felt I had a great deal to contribute and could help my wife out a great deal. But unfortunately her habits of interaction with people close to her were such that she wouldn't accept most of what I would say, and that hurt me a great deal, because I felt that what was being sacrificed was the well-being of a human being, who had no real choice. And so there was a great deal of emotional anguish on my part for many years but, as you mentioned, my being sort of a mediator, it was definitely a valid one, and important one, and so I think also I was spending a lot of time with the child, being warm and receptive and as you grow older, certainly more encouraging.

A wry chuckle here

Wanting to help

Help rejected

Difficulty of separating reflection about children from reflection about oneself

D: How old is he now?

J: He's now eight, just over eight. And he has ....

(long pause)

Pauses as waiting for emergence of topicality

D: How was your wife's reaction to the second one as opposed to the first?

J: Well, it was much different. We'd been married four years and ....

D: Was this a planned child?

J: I guess not. Not an intentional plan, but it was something that was not being deliberately prevented, by any means. So the event was a happy one, and one which we both anticipated with great pleasure. And naturally having had a son first, we sort of hoped we'd have a daughter, and we had discussed our family life and future, and were sort of comfortable with the thought of having two children; so that this would be fitting in just nicely.

Huge sigh

Desire for things to "fit"

D: And was it a girl?

J: Yes. It was perfect. And, indeed, born on Valentine's Day. She's now four. But the feelings were, as I say, very much more positive, truly positive really, and I think--and my wife has admitted this--her expectations were that she would be able to do everything right this time. Everyone makes mistakes, but she felt very strongly that this would be a chance to work things out for the best. And by the time this child was coming along, our relationship, I think, was one in which we communicated better, so that all round, the whole environment was better, and I was just like a kid, very much looking forward to it. And also, I was spending a great deal of time with my son in talking about it and explaining what was to come. At that stage in his life he was very capable of relating to it. He had seen other infants and families and what-not, so he was reacting to it very nicely, and he wanted--well, he wanted a brother (laugh)--but .... So I was right in the thick of things with it. We both were. And again, I think the magical kind of aspects were much more readily available to us to enjoy. And along came the birth. We left early in the morning and went to the hospital and, unfortunately, had not made arrangements for me to be present in the delivery room. Unfortun-

Sense of great pride and satisfaction in voice

A new child as presenting possibility of redeeming mistakes of the past

Explaining to a child what is to come

Being right in "the thick of things" over a child's coming

Wanting to be present at the birth of a child ately, much to my disgust afterwards, I found out the doctor would have permitted me to come in, despite the fact that I had no previous briefing. However, I was there right up to within two minutes, apparently--and I was there--saw my wife, I guess twenty minutes after. Anyway, I was very much involved with my wife's 'episode.' She was so glad that I was with her.

D: Had this drawn you closer together?

A wondering

J: Oh, very much so, I think. The birth of our daughter has been a great factor in our lives. Honestly, I would love to see more, but I don't think my wife would like that situation. (Pause) There's always a sense of pride, I think, one of the feelings precipitating out of this look at what feelings I have or had at the time of a birth. I really do think pride ....

Pause as waiting for topicality

Pride about birth

D: Kind of a sense of self-fulfillment through ... the offspring?

Seeking clarification

J: Yes. I'm sure that explains part of the reasons why parents are so concerned children presenting ....

D: What's your boy's name?

J: Brian. And the daughter's name is Erica.

(long pause)

Conversation over previous topic seems to have run its course

D: You mentioned that one of the things that the announcement of the child did was to make you more aware of your wife's history, and I wonder if you could say the same thing about yourself--whether you felt yourself confronted with your own history, your own models, through all this?

Searching for inner direction

J: Certainly. Yes, I think so. Of course, in a different kind of direction. Obviously. But yes, it did. It brought home my past, I suppose, and my plans and .... Well, one of the things I think that I expereienced negatively from my

Animated identification of a new theme

own point of view is that .... You see, when you're oldest in a family of ten, I felt I had let the family down in a respect. Because at that point in time, the environment socially was such that it was not a pleasant fact to admit to anyone.

Sense of letting one's family down
Social pressure

D: You were sort of the model for all the others, I suppose. Everybody looked up to you.

J: Certainly. Very much so. And I felt very small, very shameful. So that obviously had some meaning.

Feeling of betrayal of others' expectations

D: How much of a surprise was it to you? I mean, had your intimacy been a regular thing? Or was it sort of an occasional ....

J: No, it wasn't too regular. Like, it was occasional, but I was also feeling guilty about my own lack of assertiveness, I suppose, in preventing that event. And my wife was perhaps a little more careless than I. And it's something we hadn't talked out to a great extent, to a sufficient extent, obviously. But ... it certainly was a shock.

Return to theme of shock

D: When I cut you off just now, I think you were going to say something else.

Wondering if a direction had been missed

J: Yes, the things you find out and that one thinks about when things like this come are vital--your life flashes before your eyes. But from my point of view, I was looking back to my habitual expectations of myself à la future. Like--I pointed out I was looking forward to travel, to getting out and being responsible, say, just for myself for a change --because I think over the years--what was I--just about twenty-two, and I had always lived at home to that point in time with the exception of two to three months, and had great feelings of responsibility with the family. Not ones which I regretted in any way, because there was not such pleasure involved--a great deal of love and it was a great environment in which to live--but I felt it would be good to go and spend a few

Third time this theme has emerged. Wistful longing for independence and living for self
Desire for self-responsibility

months holidaying in New Zealand, or whatever--just get a totally different outlook for a change. And also I guess I had anticipated, following that, pursuing a career of some kind--perhaps not necessarily right here, or in the city--great expectations of, say, working as a geographer (I had a degree in honours geography at that time) and, even the experience in geography had whetted my appetite for travel. And also, I guess I had sort of been thinking about the possibility of meeting or getting back together with an old girl friend, or meeting someone like her. I had been in love with the same girl for years but hadn't spent more than two years taking her out from high school time on. Anyway, so there were a lot of things that were sort of in the forefront where these decisions of mine were being juggled.

Great hopes lost

Reference to honours degree now mentioned twice

Wondering about past loves

Now on the other side of the coin, I had, of course, come to know my girl friend's parents at that time, but not very well. We hadn't spent a great deal of time with them. The time we had spent with them were at social events. We had attended weddings together, weddings with the family. Perhaps gone out to dinner, an anniversary or something--a birthday. But nothing much had been experienced in just being together just sitting around for a few hours at home.

Role of spouse's family

D: So you weren't really aware--did you have any inkling of difficulties?

J: Just a little. I guess perhaps at these times when there were occasions--two or three of them--when we had driven together--and I was, well, it's a combination of things. My wife's mother has been a very bitter woman for many, many years. It's very unfortunate. I feel very sorry for her, in fact. But it's just a habit that people fall into, I suppose. But I was beginning to pick up on expressions on her face and the kinds of verbal expressions she would use, particularly with her husband, that was

Psychologizing as rationalization

Picking up and interpreting gestures of mother-in-law surprising to me. I didn't perhaps think too seriously about them at that point in time. Obviously, not planning to live with them, or not planning to be their son-in-law, really at that point. I wasn't too awfully concerned with exactly what they were doing. But I was getting an impression, some negative kinds of impressions and when the 'news' arrived, well, all hell broke loose. There was a great deal of wrath displayed and ....

Without commitment, negative experience bears no message

News of child inaugurates arrival of true feelings

D: At least that was honest. I mean there was an honest ventilation of feeling and you were seeing for the first time what you had only had an inkling of before.

J: Exactly. And I was being threatened with all kinds of things and really was made to feel very small. She was trying to put me in a position where I felt totally obliged to do what she wanted. The mother, not my wife so much at all. She had quite a way about her. And it was so frightening to me because I had never really been close--that closely involved with anyone who was that powerful in their negative emotionalism. So that definitely threw another money-wrench into my decision. I was wondering now, what's been going on all these years. What kind of a life has my wife been experiencing. Has she been showing me a false side of her, or just one very small side of her, and I had no one to go to to find these questions out. I had strictly to take my own intuition and logic, I suppose, and to count what chances I was going to be taking. And it turned out some of my greatest fears were real ones, that in a very real sense my wife knew nothing but cold conflict. She was foreign to affection--still today. It's, I think, improved over the eight years we've lived together, but it's still, to me, it's far short of my expectations of what they had been to that point. I'm a very affectionate person physically and verbally, and have always expected it in return, I suppose --need that kind of warmth. But my wife

Deep sigh

Memory of manipulation

Arrival of child ushers in question "What's been going on all these years?"

Fears turning out to be real

Chuckles almost contemptuously, shows anger is totally the opposite. It's totally foreign to her. She's not comfortable with it at all. So those kinds of things started to fall and to play into what I had to consider--not just the life of a child to raise, to cherish, but whether, in fact, I would be in an environment where I could succeed in seeing a child reared in the way I felt was necessary. Because I'm not one who likes to argue a lot and fight with people. I see little purpose in it--although I don't say it's totally useless. I think venting one's emotions certainly has its place, but to do it continually and without some reason behind it, or without a purpose, a direction or a resolution at least ....

A child's coming asks questions about environment in which it arrives

Justifying own stance against spouse

D: You made an interesting statement about "It's not just the life of a child to raise that I have to think about, but whether I would be in an environment to see a child raised." In other words, that seems to me a powerful notion--that children in and of themselves are not the only consideration. Whenever you're thinking about a child you're also thinking about yourself. It seems to me this is an inevitable thing. In order to see a child as a child, you have to be in a position where you can actually see them.

Opening up a new topic

J: But I think more of what I meant there was the fact that I was afraid. I was very afraid that what I had to contribute to the nourishing of a child could possibly be nullified by something in the other negative direction. An environment such as my wife experienced, is one in which I don't feel I would like to see a child raised. Because I think it can produce really serious problems--emotional and...I'm convinced at least that one's life is very much controlled by emotions. One's intellect is controlled by emotions. We're very seldom a non-feeling being. So that whenever we're taking in something, our feeling is involved with it and if a lot of those feelings are negative kinds of fears, and anger and bitterness, and things like that, that can very much colour our

Fear of loss of personal control in life with child

And yet his whole speech has been highly controlled whole impression of everything in the world. Our concept of man can be coloured very much by what our parents' conception, I suppose, has been, and how their behaviour towards us has been. If you've not had a loving parent, you're not likey to be an easily loving parent, offspring, adult, whatever. And that was of grave concern to me.

Influence of parental models. Fear of that influence

The other thing, too, about that is that unless one has consistency in his environment, and his emotional environment, well, especially with his parents, it can be damaging and frustrating, and also lead to problems, psychological problems. And again, that was one of the fears that turned out to be very real. Because there were not consistent kinds of attitudes between my wife and myself in terms of our behaviour towards the child ....

Fears turning out to be real. Third time this theme has emerged

Fear of parental inconsistency

D: That's something you're still having to work on.

J: Yes, always. But as I say, it's improved, and, I suppose, also I've noticed that with my son, to the point where he's much more in control of his own senses--he's doing not too badly. He's adjusting relatively well.

Relief that children can transcend their circumstances

D: Do you feel pretty close to him? How do you feel?

J: I feel very close to him, and very supportive. Here's one example of the considerations I've had. This expression of affection got to the point where my wife was incapable of truly warm expressions of affection toward my son. That's the way it was for a long time. I think that's on the improvement trend, but as a result of that, sometimes I found it hard, although I had been doing it along, showing him affection all along, he often found it difficult to accept it, to feel comfortable with it, because of the discomfort he has with my wife. They don't have a very comfortable physical interaction, and I could sense that quite

Giving examples to solicit my understanding

The need to explain a child's behaviour

a lot, and I would be very sensitive and could feel a tenseness that was there but wasn't always there, and it was the same kind of tenseness I could feel about my wife. And lately I've been relieved to see that my son has become more openly affectionate, particularly with me, and has become more comfortable in showing affection. In school, for example, when I dropped him off recently he came up and wanted a kiss and hug goodbye. It's one of the signs that is pleasing me in terms of him being more giveable of warmth. So ... Sheila also has been very much more able to show affection to our daughter, I think.

Interpreting a child's behaviour, tracing its origins

Looking for signs, wanting signs from a child

D: Because of more positive circumstances.

J: That's part of it, but also partly because she's female. I think she has a very real, deeply entrenched anxiety about males, having lost her own father through divorce, and having a step-father coming into the household who turned out to be in conflict with her mother always, and yet, of the two, I must say, he, the step-father, is much less prone to conflict, bitterness, and negativity than her mother. I get along famously with him, but I can't take too much of her. So, as a result, as I say, there seems to be that element involved--the male/female thing--receptivity, and obviously maturity has something to do with it as well ....

Explanation as coming to terms

D: In a way, then, things are always beyond words, aren't they? They're so deep that there are no words to describe them, we're sort of groping from day to day.

J: Precisely, precisely. Although it's a good exercise in a way.

## MRS. DUQUESNE: A RETIRED WIDOW, LIVING ALONE IN SENIOR CITIZENS RESIDENCE

| | | First Reflections |
|---|---|---|
| D: | Mrs. Duquesne, I very much appreciate this chance to have a talk with you and try to share a little bit of your experience with your own children. You said that you had three altogether. | She bears an expression of genuine surprise that anyone should be interested in her experience |
| MD: | Two. A daughter and a son. | |
| D: | And how old are they now? | |
| MD: | Well, my daughter must be fifty-one, my son three years younger, will be forty-nine. Funny to be mother to middle-aged children. | Co-operative, but a bit distracted by the pain of her broken hip. Thus the short answers |
| D: | How do you feel about that? | |
| MD: | No different, no, no. No different from when they were little. | |
| D: | You mentioned before we started that you "wanted" to have children. | |
| MD: | Oh, definitely, yes! And I had to wait five years before my daughter was born. | Very emphatic about wanting children |
| D: | Is that so. | |
| MD: | I don't know why, but .... | |
| D: | It wasn't for lack of trying. | |
| MD: | No. And I wanted a little daughter first in case I never had any more, because my husband was fourteen years older, and I thought, you know, taking me a long time (laugh) and my prayers were answered and I had a little daughter first, and she does mean a tremendous lot. And then a little son came along. And I shall never forget when I was in the hospital, sort of out of my semi-conscious state, I heard someone say, "You have a son!" and I said "Oh! How wonderful!" And he's been a good son to me. And so has my daughter been a good girl. | A child as an answer to prayer<br>A child "comes along"<br>Wonderful to bear a son/child |

D: Are they living in Williamstown at the moment?

MD: My son is living in Williamstown. My daughter lives in Marlboro. And it's a funny thing, she went through much the same experience. She didn't have any children, they adopted a little boy; they were so happy with him they adopted a little girl. And then the doctor discovered it was, what shall I say, something to do with the thyroid. Then after that, she had two children naturally.

Recapitulation of experience through generations
Mother/daughter comparisons

Discovering what prevents children

D: For goodness sake.

MD: Amazing, isn't it? But very lovely.

D: Yes. One of the things I'm interested in doing in this study is to try to understand the transformations that people undergo in thinking about themselves and about the world as a result of having children. Now that's a big question, and ....

MD: Yes, I don't quite know how to answer that because when it's something you've always wanted, and it happens, well, you're satisfied, so to speak, and then you think, "Now I mustn't fail my children. I've got a tremendous responsibility and I must just do the best I can." Of course, we all make mistakes, because we're parents for the first time.

Wanting children and being satisfied with them

Children inspire a desire to do one's best

D: Could you tell me a bit about how you think you could have failed your children, or, what would it have meant for you to have "failed" them.

MD: Oh, I don't know if this is what you want to know. I've always tried to be honest with them and set them an example. I've always taken them to church--that doesn't, of course, make a good person. I've always taken them to church and instilled into them what I figured are Christian principles, and I was very fortunate that I had a husband who was the same--honest and sincere and, no, I don't think I have failed them, but if I have it would be in little ways, perhaps

Wanting to instill principles in one's children

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | --denying them something they wanted, maybe, I thought they shouldn't have. I think every parent's like that. | Failure in terms of not giving enough<br>Comparing one's experience with other parents |
| D: | Sure. | |
| MD: | I remember my daughter wanted to take figure skating, and at the time I couldn't see how I was going to manage it, because I brought them up through the hard years, and so she had to be satisfied with speedskating because the instruction wasn't so expensive. Now you might call that failure, but I don't know. | Child rearing ideals are restrained by external circumstances |
| D: | Did your children go through rebellious periods at all, say, when they were, say, teenagers, or have you always had a fairly good working relationship with them? | |
| MD: | No, I can't say they did, no. There wasn't any need to, because we were a happy family. Oh, my son had a few, sowed a few wild oats. I mean, he had a friend I couldn't stand, but I mean, that's no sin, is it--that I think led him astray once in a while. I don't know. We weren't too rigid. We liked them to be home at a certain time, and I never went to bed until my daughter was in. My son --it was a little different. Boys expect a little more freedom and, so to speak, you have to give it to them. I have, what shall I say, I haven't resented them growing up, I've wanted them to grow up independent, but it's very hard to 'let go', and to decide where your parental authority should just be restrained. That's difficult. | Rebellion of child seen as feature of unhappiness<br>Slow, deliberate responses<br>Parenting as a granting of freedom<br>Dialectic between parental authority and giving up control |
| D: | How did you .... Can you give me some examples of how you settled that for yourself. How you settled that question of how to let children go. | |
| MD: | Well, I don't think it was a problem. I've done a lot of reading, and writing, and those things sort of .... I don't think I had any, what shall I say, any decisions to make about that, I just had to gradually let them go. | Noise of big truck passing by -Outside world passing by |
| D: | It sounds to me that you're a person who | |

has a very clear idea as to what you want your life to be, and in relation to your children you had an idea as to the kind of people ....

MD: I wanted them to grow up to be 'good' children, good adults.

Great emphasis on "good"

D: Do you think that maybe made it easier for you?

MD: I don't know. It might have. I mean, I'd only been a parent for the first time, so to speak, so I don't know. But they've both turned out well. My son teaches, he's a department head, studying now for his Masters. He's getting along very nicely. My daughter is well established. No, I think my greatest problem was adapting myself to the trauma of losing my husband after fifty years together, and then falling and breaking my leg, and then, while in hospital having to decide I couldn't go back to my apartment which was a walk-up, and I couldn't manage stairs, and I was out of Victoria, and I just love Victoria. Those have been the hardest part of my life, I think, to adapt myself to that--to realize that I'd got to come back to Alberta. Mind you, I've lived here and had a lot of happy years, but ever since I've been here I've been handicapped, you see, I can't get out. It's getting wrose. And that's been a tremendous adjustment, because my children had to come out, dispose of my furniture, dispose of my home, find me a little place where I can have a few things around me that I like. But I've always done a lot of things. I've been in the Handicraft Guilds, I like to do needlepoint. I like to do creative clay modelling, things like that. And I can't get out to take classes to do things like that. So it's been a very restricted life for me here. But I'm waiting now to get into the hospital to get that pin removed from my leg, and I've put myself in the hands of God and I've felt an enormous burden lifted from me. All will be well. See that little card--(pointing) MY MIR-

Everyone is a parent for the first time

Trauma of changing physical circumstances

Great emphasis on difficulty of adapting

Not being able to "get out" as handicap

Children dispose of maternal home

Need for things around we like

Putting oneself in the hands of God

ACLE IS ON THE WAY--a friend across the hall gave me that, and she's a Danish woman, and she's now gone to California to be with her doctor son for three months. She has been an inspiration to me. She has come in when I felt down and said, "Look here! Put this up where you can see it, and don't take it down. Don't give up!"

Coming to terms with one's life

Need for encouragement from others

D: Well, that's good advice. Could you tell me a little bit about your own childhood?

MD: My own childhood was spent in England. A very happy childhood. And I had parents who cared, naturally. And my father always took us, as children, once a week, to either a museum or an art gallery, or an opera, or something educational. But he had a yen to come to Canada. And my dear mother had to give up her home and come too. But she didn't come at the same time as we did. He came first and, goodness, you know, when you've been a child born in the south of England, where it's so beautiful and you come on to the Prairies and there's miles and miles of nothing. Nothing. And little culture. That's quite an adjustment to make as a child. Nevertheless, we lived in Winnipeg and music was my life, I think. I belonged to the Oratorio Society, the Opera Company, I had singing lessons in the choir and everything was music. And in those days Winnipeg was very musical. I've had a full life, and a happy life. I really have.

Great animation and enthusiasm in speaking of own childhood

Activities which make up a life

Summing up one's life

D: My father was from the south of England too, Kent.

MD: Yes, I'm a ... I don't know if I'm a Kentish maid, or a maid from Kent. It depends on which side of the river you were born on.

D: Oh, is that so?

MD: I think I was born on the south side, but I still don't know whether that's a Kentish maid or a maid from Kent.

D: Where did you grow up?

MD: Well, I grew up mostly in Hartfordshire. Because my father used to travel by train up to London on business. Near Sawbridge. Oh, I think the south--all of England's beautiful, but the south of England's very lovely.

The vividness of memories -Enthusiastic recall

D: The 'Garden of England', isn't it?

MD: It is. But so is Victoria the garden of Canada, if you've ever been out there.

D: Yes, I taught there for four years. At Glenrose School. Do you know where that is?

MD: Oh, yes! Don't you like it there? What made you come back?

D: Well, I felt somehow I didn't deserve the place yet. I had to work for it. So, I do plan to go back there, but you have to ....

MD: Well, I hope if I can gain mobility, when this wretched pin is removed. I hope I can have a little visit out there. I have so many friends, and this is the amazing thing, although Canada is so large, when I went out there I found someone I had worked with across the desk in Winnipeg, I found three people from the choir that I sang in, and someone else who used to play the organ and was a pupil of Hugo Croftbank--his first organ pupil in Carleton. So I went out right into a lot of friends, you know. I had such a happy time. Oh, I've had a happy life, really, I shouldn't even grumble when I can't do things now.

Living by hope

The assertion of happiness seems to speak of a battle against depression

D: Well, you can't help it sometimes. Maybe--can you think of some very special moments that you can remember with your children? Either good ones or difficult ones.

MD: With my children? No, I can't recall anything.

D: Say, moments when you felt particularly proud, or ....

MD: Oh, well, when my daughter was married, Mrs. Owen, the Primate's wife, lent me one of her silver tea services. So that, with mine, I had a lovely table. And I was able to use my husband's father's sword for my daughter to cut the cake with. But those are just little trivial things.

Importance of generational continuity

D: I don't think they're trivial. Because those are things that certainly your children will remember and they become part of the child's experience that they carry with them.

MD: I went to Marlboro for Christmas and it seemed so strange. All the silverware on the table, and all the good Royal Doulton ware china. Nearly everything that my daughter was using on the table at Christmas was mine at one time. So I go there and find part of my home there, and that's very nice.

Generational continuity carried through 'things'

Sounds more resigned to this than glad

D: Do you get to see them quite often?

MD: No, I don't go down very often.

D: I guess not now, with your leg.

MD: Oh, I don't get down at all now. I wouldn't have got down for Christmas had it not been that my son drove me down. But you have to make the best of what you have, and I have a lot to be thankful for. It's very comfortable here. Small--after having a home, it's pokey. A home, a little nest you build, so to speak. Cosiness and comfort and support and encouragement. Oh, a home means so much. I'm so lucky I had a good home. I had a marvellous husband. And I'm not young anymore. I started my eighty-second year on November the twenty-fourth. And I'm still ....

Coming to terms with one's lot

Looking out window: dream-like quality to this speech about a home

D: You're still active up here (pointing to head). That's a good sign.

Laugh together

MD: So, I don't think I'm giving you very much special information to go on. But you're talking to a contented woman, really. Contented with life.

Reluctance to regard her experience as significant

D: Could you think of any particular moments, say, with your children that were particularly trying, or disappointing, or ....

MD: Not really, except when my son used to go out with this awful boy. Horrible boy. He wasn't even pleasant to look at. I never have discovered what my son saw in him. I was so grateful when the thing kind of broke off. No, I'm sorry I can't tell you any dreadful things about my children. I can tell you some dreadful things about myself, but not about my children.

Fear of bad influences on one's children -Loss of parental control

I remember in Carleton when I was singing a solo in, I don't know whether it was a Stabat Mater or what it was in the choir, and I had just a note from the organ, and I had to start right in. And if you're musical, you know when you hear a chord, you can hear four different notes. And I started it all wrong. So it threw the whole thing into another key.

But the organist was a clever man who later went on to the Schola Cantorum in New York, and he rapidly changed. I thought I'd go through the floor.

D: Yes, I've done that myself. I've sung quite a bit, too. Lately with the John Langford singers.

MD: Oh, I used to sing with them too, when John Langford was alive. Oh, music and art, all forms, have filled my life.

D: Well, you're lucky. How do you account for that?

MD: Well, I suppose you inherit those things. My father, for instance, for a while, lectured for the Government of Canada, in Britain. But as a younger man--he told me that it was very wrong of him--but he used to steal time, sometimes, to go over to the House of Commons to listen to the debates, when he should have been working, you see. Because he loved hearing these men speak. Their elocution

Having one's life filled is an inheritance

Perceived value of hearing good speech

was so beautiful.

D: We don't have much of that nowadays!

MD: English is, was, my favourite subject at school. I don't know, I've been just lucky to have parents like that. Don't you think?

Having good parents is a matter of luck

D: I think it makes a big difference.

MD: And all my mother's people are artistic. I had an uncle who was a sculptor and did, under the direction of his teacher, did the little figure that surmounts the Queen Victoria memorial outside Buckingham Palace. Art runs through the family on my mother's side.

Value placed on inheritance

(phone rings)

Outside world breaks in

Well, ask me something else.

D: Would you have any thoughts about what's happening in the world today?

Question searches for the content of her speech

MD: Oh, yes! But don't get me started on politics.

D: Well, what about, say, in relation to adults and parents and children.

MD: Children and parents? Well, of course, there are too many women, wanting careers instead of wanting to make homes and bring up their families. This Women's Lib. business, I think, is terrible. Granted, if your children have grown to the age when they can be left without harm, that sometimes is necessary for a woman to fulfill her potential. But nothing ever held me back from fulfilling my potential. I stayed home. My husband was one of these old-fashioned men who--"My wife work? I should say not!" --as if you didn't work at home anyway (laugh) but it never held me back. But I do think that women away from the home are responsible for a lot of the things that are wrong.

Reflecting on the world

Sense-making

Interpretation

And of course, the television, and the

Search for causality

so-called comics--bad grammar, violence --of course, they're responsible.

D: More so than in the past, for example?

MD: Oh, I think so. Because women, as mothers of the race, have a tremendous responsibility, I feel. And although it's all right to say "women's place is in the home", yes, up to a point. But it's the mother that makes the home, isn't it? Without a mother, it really isn't a home, is it? A man may look after his children but it's Mother you run to if you fall and hurt yourself. It's Mother you run to and ask for advice nine times out of ten. At least, I think that.

Women as mothers of the race
Very emphatic speech

The mother makes the home

Assumed division of labour

D: But why do you think women are dissatisfied with that today?

MD: I don't know. I don't know why. But I think they have not been satisfied to make a home. Discontent, but don't ask me why.

Incomprehension as to why women can't be content with motherhood

D: I wonder if it's going to change.

MD: I don't know. I just don't know. Maybe they want something more than home life. But what's lovelier? Of course, I love cooking, for instance. What's lovelier than making a good meal, setting a nice table, having your husband and your children say, "Oh, Mum, that's wonderful!" What could give you more pelasure than that? Who'd want to go out and eat at a café? No, I'm afraid I can't give you any adverse reactions. But I think that women, let's say, are responsible for a lot of the things that have gone wrong with children.

The profound satisfaction of mothering

## MRS. AINSLEY: A PRINCIPAL OF A LARGE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

| | | First Reflections |
|---|---|---|
| MA: | I have pneumonia, to tell you the truth. I've got terrible congestion on my chest. And I just can't stay home, I've got so much to do. I have a commitment to a special education function--after school. Tomorrow we're taking 450 children to the circus. It's just things that propel me, I'm really feeling very badly. | Highly distracted<br>Much nervous energy present at outset<br>"Things" propel in spite of personal feeling |
| D: | That sounds quite serious. Well, I certainly appreciate your willingness to do this. I'm sure it will be helpful, because I felt in our earlier conversation a certain sensitivity to the kinds of questions I'm exploring. | Attempt to calm her down |
| | Perhaps we could begin by you telling a bit about your experience generally; a bit of a profile of your involvement in education. Did you take your teacher training in this province? | |
| MA: | Oh, yes. I took one year teacher training at Marlboro. I had considerable music training and I had thought of going to Toronto Conservatory to get my degree in music, upon leaving high-school. But I wanted to teach music and I stayed home one year because I was through high school at an early age and my mother thought I was a little young to go to Toronto. So she thought maybe I should try teacher training. One thing that disillusioned me about music teaching was that I couldn't be sure they'd do their work. You gave your heart and soul to the lesson; then away they went. So that's one factor when I went--to consider school teaching. I've taught all my life, except the first year we married. I wasn't going to and didn't teach that year. Then in March they, the Board came to me--I'd been on staff before--Vic Martel came to me. And that's when I went back, and I've been with it ever since. I find it extremely challenging. If I had to do it all over again I wouldn't change it. I just find that education is a changing kind of a | Teaching not a first vocation<br>Wanting to be sure children do their work: desire for control<br>To teach all one's life<br>Summing up one's life |

thing. I love the classroom, mind you. When I say education, at first it was classroom teaching and I thought this would be my life work because I was so preoccupied, and gave so much to my job. However, one of the supervisors in the system came to me and wanted me to be a consultant. My principal said, "No way. You like classroom teaching too much, don't take it, Anne." So I said no the first year. The next year the supervisor came back to me and said, "You're going. If you don't like it you can go back to your old classroom the next year." Well, I found working with adults equally as rewarding. I had the best of both worlds. I was working with teachers. I was working with children in the classroom in demonstration work, in helping teachers plan. So, instead of it being a one year appointment, it was a four year appointment. I went from one year, to another year, to a third year, to a fourth year. And then I had to get out. I was becoming again in a rut, a comfortable rut, from the classroom into consulting. Then they came and said, "We've got a job for you" and I said, "What is it?" and they said, "Principal, at Jonathan Cook school." It was the last thing in the world I ever thought I'd be. I'd taken admin. but I thought after working with teachers maybe I'd want to do some supervisory work. But principal of a school? Never. I had never entertained the very thought. I had always been extremely happy and very committed to ten years at the other school and this is my first year here.

Theme of "being wanted" by others comes through several times

Conversation has settled down by this point

Having to get out, getting in a rut

Being wanted for a job

That's my background, in more than a nutshell!

Searching for topicality

D: When you say you enjoy the consulting working with adults as much as with children, do you see the enjoyment as being very different between those two things?

MA: Not really, I suppose it's professional development. It's helping teachers on behalf of kids, eh, the students. And that, to me, is what it's all about.

Helping teachers on behalf of kids

Education. I have to be very careful here, because I've very often taken a stance where I say children come first, and, boy, your staff will come down on you: "What about me?" sort of thing. True, I care about people, I'm maybe an overly sensitive person myself. I find that I really read into situations when I'm working with a large staff like here. The first year's always the most difficult, though. But no, I think there is a similarilty between the sensitivity and enjoyment both to students and to staff/adults. I like children, yes.

Children come first (what does 'child' mean here?)

D: Could you talk a bit more about that.

Opening up the topic

MA: Well, I think they're honest. I think that maybe the greatest miracle, see, experience is having a child who comes to you, year one, grade one, whatever, unable to read, and by the end of first year is reading. That, to me, is the greatest miracle. And certainly it is a miracle, when you try to work with a child who can't read, eh, so those are the kinds of things that have excited me. The growth of children, the steady progress. You get them when they're young, and you see them by the time they hit grade four they have become independent learners, if they are successful, of course--in most cases they are. Independent learners--able to take off on independent study with skills. I guess it's just a very rewarding experience to be with people who give so much of themselves. Kids are like that. They give all, they're sincere, they're appreciative: "Thank you for bringing us the film on cars" for example--things like that. Whereas I think when you get into upper grades it's sort of different. And that's why I like the elementary.

Experience of children as being honest

Children and miracles

Actual conversation very disjointed in this segment

Sense of reward in seeing children develop independence from you

Kids as a generic category

D: Yes, I'm the same. When we talk about things like "grew with steady progress" as being qualities that we find exciting about children, are we talking about a sense of the future? In other words, what inspires us about children when we see their progress is perhaps a sense

Trying to formulate the direction

that the future is going to be OK--in other words, that to watch a child progress is to sort of see an unfolding of a life, and a reminder in our adult preoccupation with the world's miseries that the child, by his progress, comes as a sign of hope.

MA: Well, did we talk about my philosophy the other day?

D: Just briefly.

MA: I think I told you that my number one goal statement for children is a "Joy in learning." I think you have to offer a variety of experiences in the school, and meaning by that, you know, fine arts experiences, etc. Something besides the academic kinds of routine things. Number two would be for kids to have good self-esteem, good self-concept, feel good about themselves. And that is something that we give lip service to, but boy, it hit home this year.

Philosophy as goals

Goals as joy in learning and self-esteem

D: Is that so?

MA: These kids, they have this idea, "It doesn't matter. I never could do anything." A very negative attitude. It came through on the staff systems survey, when they asked, "Are the other children in your school nice?" And 51% said "No." A negativism here. They've had many failures, and they just don't have a good self-concept. So we've gone to full-time counselling this next year, which is rare in our system today. I was talking to people last night who were from Grace Hill--a person who was an assistant out there. They've cancelled the counsellor. And I know my board of trustees, through Mr. Johnstone, said to me, "How come you have a full-time counsellor? I talk to other schools and they're getting rid of the counsellors." So, yes, there's a lot of work to be done in the whole human development area of self-concept, self-worth, self-esteem.

Appropriation of language of psychology as basis for reflection about children

Human development as psychological

So that would be my second theme. And

in order to have good self-esteem, and self-concept, the kids have got to be success oriented. And if they're going to be success oriented, that means working at a level. And it doesn't matter whether they're year four, or grade two, or what level, they must be successfully placed.

And then I say, for joy of learning, for self-concept, for success-orientation, the kids have to have some basic skills, or they're not going to be able to be success-oriented. And whether that's 'Future', yes, I guess it is. It seems to me we can turn on tapes, we can turn on TV but there comes a time when we've got to be able to read some signs as we move around, even if we're just on the road.

Self-esteem
↕
Success
↕
Basic skills

D: Does that bother you, that movement toward more technologically oriented instruction, etc.?

MA: Oh, yes. I think human interaction--interaction between child/pupil or teacher/child is the most important thing that happens. We talked about that the other day. That, to me, is 'Curriculum.' What it's really all about is 'what goes on between the teacher and child in that classroom'. And I could go on to say that therefore your teacher becomes your most important component or factor in the whole educational system.

Searching to identify "What it's all about"
Mentioned four times in the conversation

Teachers as components in the system

D: When you said about these qualities, that "children are the greatest miracles", that they inspire these feelings in us, and so on. Are you saying there that there's some quality innate in children that inspires this in us or is it something that depends on a prior decision on our part as adults about the nature of the child?

MA: Oh, I think it varies a lot. It can vary between you and I because of our make-up, our own background.

Knocks fist on desk at word "make-up"
Human make-up as basically material

D: And our own childhoods?

MA: Yes, exactly. Experience .... What it is that's made me like I am, whatever I am. I remember the time my mother asked me to sit down and play for a neighbour lady. And she said, "Oh, I never did like music; I never did like kids." And there she was, a great family friend. She had no joy, was a very cold, frigid person. Yes, I think for me, there's something about all children that's great. And whether I can capitalize, and the children can evoke those kinds of feelings in me, is pretty much what I am. What I am at that point. All my epxeriences.

Childhood memories not forgotten

D: It seems to me it's an important question because, often when people say, "Oh, I love kids", they're really not so much saying something about the nature of children--they're saying more about themselves. For example, some people would argue in child psychology that there's something innate in adults that makes them want to love kids, an instinctual sort of thing. Do you think that's true of teachers? Or does our relationship to children depend more on conscious decisions they make about what kids are, and their own backgrounds?

MA: I think that the kinds of experiences they've had, maybe right from day one when a teacher starts out--will determine whether it's going to be good or bad. When teachers are cold, calculating individuals--well, what makes them go into teaching? Somebody made a broad statement the other day that they wouldn't be in teaching unless they wanted to be. But you know, I'm not sure that's right. I think it's a kind of a good life, if you're a family man you have that couple of months with your family. (Those breaks--thank goodness, because I need them, I would never have been sane if I didn't have time to relax, when you pour yourself into your work four months at a time, eighteen hours a day, this sort of thing, which is too much, I know, but some of us do it. I think we do have to have that.) But maybe they're in teach-

Asking for what makes a teacher

Martyr complex

ing because it's a life-style that appeals to them. And really, what do we do? The first thing we start talking to kids about is Career Development, and start to expose them. My counsellor last year had grade 4, 5, 6--and was talking to them about future careers. And we get books in our library now on Career Development. We're trying to get in more on Women, you know, Women's Lib. even. We think in terms of careers, and what it's going to make possible for us. Our parents guide us into something, or at least encourage us to do things that will be rewarding. I think in most cases--my parents certainly would want me to do something that would give me a life-style of security and be a wage-earner. Today's kids are different. Our parents are saying, "Oh, I don't really care. Let them go to Europe for a year. They'll find something." And they come home and sit on the doorstep and Mom and Dad feed them, and the whole bit. And sometimes they don't do anything more. But that wouldn't have happened in my day, because everybody had to get out and fend for themselves.

Difficult to discern the basic direction of this segment Speech is wandering

Perception of lapse of parental care

D: You can sense these attitudes?

MA: Oh, yes. You mean what their aspirations are?

D: Well, I was going to ask you about the kind of changes you've seen over the years between parents attitudes 'then and now.'

MA: I think parents are much too indulgent with children, even in money handling, today. When I say indulgent, that brings up the money bit. I didn't mean to bring that up first because there's so many things more important than money, but now that we're on this, we have a boy here who came into school three weeks ago and he had a couple of 80¢ chocolate bars. We contacted the home, we were sure there was something wrong. We find out that this child was getting ten dollars a week, and writing cheques at Red Rooster

On indulgent parents

Genuine sense of shock over this incident to buy these things. Now, really, a grade four child, how old was he? Ten years of age. It creates a lot of feeling in the room, when he shares with two or three others, when he comes in with these great big quantities. So, I say that parents are kind of silly. This is a family with a strong religious background, which really amazes me. A strong religious background--I watch their church service on television. I can't believe that they would be as permissive with this child. I mean, there's nobody to look after him when he goes home. The other day, there was a fire in the back yard. But there was a cover-up by Dad when I phoned a couple of times. That, to me, is one of the big changes.

Perceived contradiction between religious values and life-values

I think the big change is that one time parents would be responsible for their children, and accountable. When there is a crisis now, I find the parents trying to hide. And they don't always give you the true picture. Because I think their conscience is bothering them, really. And they know better--many of our parents know better. Whereas I think parents ten years ago would come to grips with a problem--that's the difference between this school and the other school I was at. At the other school, when I had a problem with a child, my parent was there. My parent said, "OK, Mrs. A., what can we do about this?" and away we went. And here, I find there is an attempt to reject ownership of a problem. They want to skirt it. They won't come to grips with it. They're too busy. They're not at home. But I have nothing against people working, as long as children are looked after. I think we can become too traditional in our perception where parents should be, where the mother should be. So I want to keep an open mind, but I certainly disagree with these children being left alone at 7:45 in the morning, left then for themselves--as a grade three student. These are the things I see happening today, which we wouldn't have experienced ten years ago.

Parents are no longer accountable and responsible for their children

Parents won't tell the truth about their children

Parents reject ownership of a child's problems

D: It's becoming more common?

MA: It is in this area. Oh, yes, I think maybe our whole economy is making it mandatory, if people have mortgage payments and are having to renew home payments, at interest prices today. You'd better believe that mothers are going to have to get out. But on the other hand, you know what they do--they go and buy a boat, go and buy a trailer, and they go and buy all these other things too. So I'm not too sure, maybe they could survive on one salary. But if self-actualization is happiness, and I don't believe working all day and going home to a demanding little family of children who are excited about life is the most happy thing when you beat yourself out at a job all day. So, whether going out to work is self-actualization, I don't know.

Circumstances create the conditions for forms of parenting

Work and self-actualization

D: I think I would agree with you there's a very real kind of economic and political dimension to the whole question too, particularly in relation to mortgages, etc.

So that means in a sense, then, that the school and the family are undergoing a change in their relationship. It seems to me that there was a time when the function of the school was very clearly laid out in most people's minds--that's where the kids gained their basic education, and the family took the parenting roles, but now school is having to pick up the slack for other areas.

Trying to put relationship of school to parenting in context

MA: Yes. I have to use a very basic example. I think when a child comes to school hungry, he's got to be fed before he will ever learn. Now, I say that that is not the school's responsibility, but I'm sorry to say that it has to be its responsibility. We have to do something. But going one step further to a very real problem here is the matter of noon lunches. Now some parents are saying to me, "Daycare." "Daycare!", they're yelling. "Get someone to look after our

The school's reluctant moral obligation to children because of failing social conditions children at noon! I'm working!" Father owns a business, mother is an assistant manager, or whatever, in the business, and they have no mercy on the school. As far as supervision of those children in the morning and at noon hour. And I have a real sensitivity to that but I want to keep asking and I've said this to my associate, "How good am I going to be in the afternoon, if I have to babysit kids all afternoon as a teacher?" In this area they tell me--my Community League over here said, "Leave it alone, Mrs. A. If you start, you're not going to have 40, you're going to have 400." Parents would gladly pay you a dollar to look after those children all day, and off they go. You see, and I say to you, sure I think we have to take on the role of so many of the responsibilities that should be parental, but should we really? We have to, because that's the way it is.

Economic conditions and forms of parenting in relation to school

The heavy demands on teachers to be both parents and educators

D: Your responsibility is not to, perhaps?

MA: Yes, and I maintain if kids eat their lunch in a smelly old classroom, and then they come in that room to work in the afternoon, with apple, orange, stuff spilled all over. If we had the facilities for a lunch room, OK. But the elementary schools in this city don't, except perhaps the odd one has excess space. But we don't have one smidgeon of space.

Schools being forced to take on parenting roles

Yes, I feel there are so many things we have to take on, even caring. Even just to talk, to pat him on the shoulder and say, "Hey, you're doing a good job. Thank you very much!" Well, he's just stimulated beyond words because he knows he's pleasing somebody. We haven't time any more to give that positive reinforcement in the home to children. It's "Go and watch television". And I'm being very critical because I think there are many children suffering from lack of loving, tender care.

Caring for children as a function to be "taken on"

Perception of children as lacking care

I don't think the schools do a bad job. Some teachers are certainly cold and less caring--maybe very good teachers--so I can't say all teachers, but I think the school today is oriented to knowing the importance of dignity, praise, reward, positive reinforcement.

D: The notion of 'care' seems to me quite a powerful one. Would you say that unless there was a sense of care in a classroom, it wouldn't really be an educative process. Or that inevitably it's 'educative' but it could be destructive. If children don't feel they're being cared for.

Searching for the essence of care

MA: I dare say some of our very brilliant people may be cold and insensitive. They're lost in a world of their own. Their goals are such that they strive and work so hard to achieve them that I don't know whether they would feel a lack. Some people don't need it. Some people don't need it. I think basically we all do, but there are people who seemingly, let's put it that, don't require that. So maybe there's the odd child in a classroom who will excel despite anything, and never show any hostility. He's got a strong emotional 'self' and he can survive pretty well. I do believe that, yes, unless there's a sense of caring, then the educative process isn't complete, right. Because that's part of your whole development.

Association of intelligence and intellectual development with insensitivity?

D: Could you give just a thumbnail conceptualization of what you think education is? What's your task as a principal of a big school like this?

Searching for the grounds of an educator's task

MA: My task, as I see it, is the total development of the individual to his potential. When I say total development, I mean social, emotional, physical fitness, cultural tolerance, citizenship, the rights of others, how we interact with people (of course, part of that is social), and then, of course, our intellectual--and to do that in a happy, happy positive learning environment. I have kids that I meet now that say to me, "Gee, I remember when I was in your room over at Hemphill

Education as development of potential

Education should be happy

School, and the things we did." And they're in Grade 12, some of them into Medicine. And you know it's really rewarding when they look back to those happy times and remark about the "time we did such and such." I guess those are the good things about teaching, and they were successful. These kids have gone on. One of the boys was a Rhodes Scholar, the Hampson boy; Lisa Ross is in research at the university--that's what it's all about, eh? And when you say, "What is Education?" Well, seeing kids through these stages in their lives become people who can go out into society and make a contribution, live in the world and make for a better world, I suppose. We want happy successful individuals and so on. How to do that is developing the child to his maximum potential. I don't know what else to say. I guess I've never thought of it in it's total sense, you know, education.

The good things about teaching are happy times and being successful according to certain values

Searching for "what it's all about": happy successful individuals

Never thought about education as a whole before

D: I notice you have pictures of kids on your desk. Are they former students?

MA: No. I have a book with a lot of pictures in it, but, by the way, I have to tell you that's one of my boys, a Chinese boy, just got the Gold Medal at the university. His mother said to me last night, "You know, Anne, if it hadn't been for you being a consultant at that time and taking such an interest in James, and getting him into the public system and getting the schools to consider him not staying in Grade one, and so on." Yes, he's graduated, 18 years of age, and won the Gold Medal. So these are the kinds of things. It's the feedback you get, eh. But also at the end of a day, to go home, my husband--he died--and I would have such great laughs over the crazy things that kids would do. It takes a special kind of a person, I think. And yet, my friends, when we go out of an evening, I try not to bring in education, but invariably, whether it's because they're just good friends, but we come around to it. They want to know what's going on. But it has been a--well, I guess it's been

Students as personal possession: "one of my boys"

Children make one laugh

Invariably people want to know what's going on in education my life. Too much of my personal life too, at times.

Teaching as a life

D: Well, you've probably been an inspiration to people, it sounds like to me.

MA: Well, I'm enthusiastic, that's for sure.

In Greek, "enthusiasm" means "possessed by a god"

D: I had some other questions but it seems we've covered many of them. One other question, I did want to ask you, had to do with what kinds of qualities you look for in a teacher when, say, you're hiring.

D: Well, one of the first questions I ask now is, "Do you like young children?" because I think that if all of our teachers, meaning high school teachers too, had to, at some time, work through lesson presentation, successfully present and successfully achieve the goals that they would have in the lesson and could do that with young children, I think that our teachers are made. I think that many of our upper people haven't gotten down to the very basic process of learning--the kinds of things we know about it, let's put it that way. So I think one of the first things I ask is, "Do you like young children?" because some teachers have said to me, "I want to be in junior high because I don't like kids." Well, you jolly well better not hire them. So, whether they really enjoy kids, that's important.

Emphasis on word "like"

Teaching as the achievement of goals

The basic processes of learning assumed to be known

A sense of humour is important too, if you can detect this. And then, of course, I think, whether they're elementary trained. I will no longer hire a secondary person unless they've taken some reading courses, and some basic courses. Because to me the knowledge content, the methodology, working with young children, is vastly different. So I want them to have elementary training.

The importance of humour in dealing with children

Very emphatic speech here

I look for areas of expertise, and try to get a balance on the staff. I want some Phys. Ed. for physical. I want some music--to me music is just a very important component. I find that if you can create a liking for music, they'll get to like school and learning. The very hub for me is language arts--in the elementary school. I defy anybody to tell me that a kid can do anything unless he has some competence in language arts. He can't do his science, his social studies, his math. Even his math.

For children, liking music can mean liking school

Language education as the hub of the elementary school

But a desire, liking for children is another thing, meaning that if they really, truly care--that word. Not love anymore. To me, it's caring. We've used the word 'love' loosely for too long--a love for this, and a love for that. I think, maybe, the very fact that we care, is a better way of expressing it.

The importance of "care" for children

D: Maybe just as a closing point, I'll give you a chance to sort of fantasize about the future. What do you see?

MA: I'm totally shocked, after listening to a futurist last night, who said, "By the year 2020 there'll be no schools. There'll be computer education." I just don't see that human interaction element that is so important to a child--that one to one relationship--being replaced by a computer. I don't know. I've seen things recycle--philosophies. I would be positive about the future if I could be sure that everyone's needs were met, on an individual basis. I think that public education may have a pattern of trying to organize on the basis of the mob, general people. I'd like to see more people realize success, working to their potential, again. Something for all, and opportunities for everyone to feel that they are an important cog in the wheel.

The human interactional element between teacher and child can't be replaced by technology

Education as a meeting of individual needs

Philosophy as recyclable

D: Are you optimistic about it?

MA: I was idealistic about it when I started teaching. As I became more involved and more experienced I became more idealistic. Right now, it worries me that we're becoming too 'work conditions' oriented. "Don't ask me to do anything after. How can I possibly do that?" The idea of

Experience brings idealism

teachers being under stress is completely overdone. They're all talking stress. When I say all, I mean we hear that so much. I'm not talking about one school or anything like that. There's so much about stress. I don't know. What is life all about? I ask you, when it comes to education, why are we in education? Would it be better if children were allowed to develop under conditions such as they are? I don't think so. I happen to believe there are basic needs in life that are important, and that education is one. Yet I don't think (I hesitate to say this because we're on tape) I don't think teachers generally today really have the commitment to children that is necessary to realize the kind of a thing that I spoke about a few minutes ago. One teacher said to me after a staff meeting the other day, "I hope we never get back to that idea where we have to have two to three groups in each grade." You know, this idea of just having a language arts course where you teach to everyone. Yet that's the very thing (groups) we've been struggling for years and years and years. And then to have somebody sit here and say that to me shocked me. Because you can't put 25 to 30 kids in my one room and expect them all to be able to handle that. It's just unrealistic. So that's the kind of thing that scares me. And I find this more and more that, "I have a personal life" and "I must look after me." And I think that through the years we have had educators who have been willing to give of self more.

Perception that teachers overdo the emphasis on stress

Asking for "what it's all about"
Search for wholeness

Teachers today don't really have a commitment to children

Concern about the ego-centrism of teachers

D: A sense of vocation, of being called to it.

MA: Exactly. I suppose we always will have those--some that will, but I hope we don't have a general trend where we become so labour-union oriented that we have no time for anything apart from the basic rules and regulations of our situations.

Concern about the formal organization of teachers

D: I find it really odd that usually that language is couched in language of personal rights. So in other words, even though today human rights is a high profile issue it's not that other side of this chronic individualism. It's not a sense of human rights in its broadest sense, where we think about human society in such a way that we're all taken care of, or take care of each other. It's rather human rights as making sure that nobody steps on my toes.

MA: Of course, we're talking out of both sides of our mouths in many cases. The very people today that espouse one, you turn right around and it's the other side. But, oh, yes, after I heard this man last night, I started to think, "Gee, if I had a family, what would I really want for them?" And one man that had reacted to this fellow said, "You know, we have become so possessive, so possession oriented--just one monetary, materialistic thing after another." There he is, a multi, multi millionaire! And I started to think, "What would I do if I was raising children today? When somebody says there'll be no schools by 2020 A.D.--what would I do with a three-year-old? What kind of values, what kind of preparation can I give that child, when he has to be re-trained 3, 4, 5 times in a lifetime? Is it money you want to leave them so that they have something to work with? Is it values? Do we enforce our values--people say we shouldn't. What do you leave them? I'm asking you a question now, instead of you, me. But it's certainly thought-provoking.

Contemporary circumstances pose anew the question of how to care for children

What is of value in relation to raising children?

D: And I think too--this is a personal opinion--that there's a sense in which a commitment to these qualities that you mentioned sets oneself up for rejection. People will argue that you're a sentimentalist, or whatever. And that's maybe what it comes down to.

MA. Become a workaholic. Just work to survive. I work to survive. I work as much as I can because if I didn't do it, I'd never make it.

Working to survive

## KEVIN: A VICE-PRINCIPAL OF A LARGE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

First Reflections

Very gentle-mannered, sensitive demeanour

D: We'll start with a general question and then move to talk about some specific situations in which you're involved with kids. I'd like to maybe explore what it is you like about kids, or maybe explore what it is you don't like, because I'm trying to get inside what it is that people believe about children, and so on. And we can talk about that in terms of specific situations.

K: OK. We'll start off with 'How or why I got into teaching, became a teacher.' As I was telling you before, that I'd always aspired even as a young individual to be a teacher, maybe because I had some real positive models in my life when I was going through school who were excellent teachers, and who I looked up to, and that sort of thing. The program that I went through, at university, and so on--a four-year phys. ed. program--I decided after that I would then change over into the education field. I think I'd always wanted to go that way, rather than go into education and take the phys. ed. program. You get a better basis for phys. ed.

Teaching as a first vocation
Inspiration of a teacher for a child
Value of positive adults for a child
Importance for child to "look up" to adults

D: You did the A.D. program?

K. The PD.A.D. program, yes. And then went through in education. I couldn't get a job actually here right in Williamstown right away after graduation. That was a time when there was a great number of education students coming out of that department. In '74 this was. So I applied and went to Australia, and I taught there for two years and then came back to Williamstown and applied for a position and got on with the Board at that time--Public--and have been with them ever since. And enjoy it.

Setting the scene/ background

D: When you say you were perhaps inspired by models that you had as teachers yourself ....

K: Yes. I had some individuals--a grade 9 teacher, Mrs. Gillian, she was the kind of teacher that I think you really respected a lot, was able to control the classroom through various ways, through a lot of good discipline methods, but not to the extent to which kids were battered, or anything like that, and she seemed very human-like, you know, a real person.

A child's grounds for respect of a teacher:
control with good discipline
to seem very human, a real person

Then I think I had through Junior High--I don't remember too many of my elementary teachers because we moved around a little bit too much. And I think another person I sort of looked up to was a science/phys. ed. teacher that I had--Mr. Solway, I think his name was. And I think I really liked him a lot and looked to him as a model, for several reasons. During that period of time, my father passed away--about three or four years before that. So he sort of became a real neat figure to me as that image. He was a young fellow, a young teacher, and really took a concern in kids, and liked kids a lot, you could tell that. He did a lot for kids--spent a lot of extra time with us. So I think those two individuals during Junior High School had a fair amount of impact on my decision to go into teaching. Because I thought, if I can give those kind of models to other students, then ....

a father figure

showing concern for a child
spending extra time with a child

Teacher wants to pass on values

D: So there was a real sense of appreciation.

K: Yes.

D: Was that something you picked up from afar, so to speak, just by watching them or did you have a personal involvement with them?

K: As far as personal involvement--I felt like they were a friend, that you could go and talk to if you needed to, someone that, in case you're in trouble or you needed help in a certain area, you could possibly ask this person for information, or for some help. And I felt like you could trust these people. I think that's pretty important for kids,

Teacher as friend to talk to, provide information

Importance of trust

like myself, to have someone you can trust. And I know for kids that's really important, because when you look at our society today, and just kids in general, even in this school, kids don't trust each other enough. They don't believe that a person is actually really good, and they have to be proven the other way first. It's nice to have someone who is there, who's consistent and can be trusted. I think that's a pretty big important trait for a teacher to have, so that the kids can identify with that, and learn from it too.

Contemporary loss of trust, even children with each other

Children need trust, trustworthiness

D: Those are kinds of values that you try to ....

K: Yes, that's the way I've developed now my teaching style. I try to give the things to the kids that are going to be life-long skills, that they will acquire --working right through all the activities I do from regular classroom teaching to the extra-curricular activities that we organize--intramurals and that. Plus some of the after-school things, just on the spur of the moment. And you can see a real need for kids to care about each other and take pride in themselves too, as well. And, if you can give them the opportunity to develop and to recognize that this isn't the kind of behaviour that we appreciate--you know, we're not always as consistent as we'd like in real life, anyway, and that we try to be more on the positive side than the negative, and I think that's what I try to do as far as creating moral and value standards in my classroom are through my own model and my own presentation.

Giving children something for life

The need for children to care for one another

Seeing oneself as a model for children as a teacher

And I think it varies from school to school. I know in other schools that I've taught in that they haven't had to do it much or as extensively, and that all, I'm very sure, relates to the kind of community and the kinds of transience rates we have. Not saying that single-parent families are to blame, but a lot of single-parent families don't have the consistency at home. Mom's away, and

Social conditions influence the substance of relations whatever. So there's not that kind of thing, so. There are so many things that knit together in a community, especially like this one, that once you've identified the problem, you can work on it.

Identifying problems to work on

We've had a lot of problems here with students fighting, and that sort of thing. Well, you know, you try to look at students and you say, "Why are you fighting?"--they're like little firecrackers, they just explode, you know. And then you look and a lot of times it's the home situation and it's just brought back to the school. And that's a big part of it too, is being consistent--being fair. Those kinds of things that I mentioned about the teachers that I identified with earlier. They had all the kinds of things that I thought were really good in a teacher, in a person who was a friend or someone you could rely on. All those good qualities that were important.

Need to be able to explain children's behaviour

Importance for a child of having someone to rely on

D: Do you see, in a neighbourhood like this, a certain breakdown in human relationships taking place, so that the school is having to take on more and more responsibility for ....

K: Yes, we're finding that here. Self-concept, self-worth and having a good feeling about oneself is a real ongoing task that we have identified as a problem here. And so as a result of it, have made certain steps towards trying to improve the situation. For example, we have increased our counsellor time here, so that we can, you know, get kids in that do have some problems, and work with them and try to develop them along. Yes, I think that's a real good point that you make that in this area--not everybody, you still have your central core of students who are a stable community. You try and build from that. When the new kid comes in the block, or whatever, you know, they try to fit into that kind of, not necessarily 'mould' but that same kind of ideals and things

Children don't like themselves in this place

Counsellors help children along

Desire to instill in children what, as an adult, is deemed important that we consider are important in the school here.

D: It's interesting just driving around this community, that it looks like a fairly progressive one--new houses, etc.

K: It is, oh yes, very.

D: So you're saying that underneath that is a certain ....

K: Yes, well, we have ....

D: There's more than just individual cases. There's a general sense of ....

K: Yes, I think it's general right through this belt of west end schools, you find in a community where you have very high socio-economic groups, you know, upper-middle class residents/people, and you have the rentals, low rentals right across from the school here. And that sort of conflicts. There are conflicts there. People in the condominiums. Condominiums are condominiums and people can still move in and out of them just as easily as they can a town house. So you have this population that's kind of floating around the city and it's always mingling with the population that's real stable. I'm not saying that they're not 'stable', it's just that they're moving. And kids really need to have consistency and I think that we find, especially in this area, that the kids we seem to have a fair amount of problems with are the ones that have moved around a lot, not just the fact that they've moved, though --there are some internal problems at home, as well. But that, coupled with all this moving seems to bring about all the conflicts that we have.

Conflicts in social conditions

Perceived need of children for consistency

Moving creates problems for children

You know, we've really worked on that here, at this school. We've managed to really ... well, you can go out on our playground now, and it's really pleasant. Kids are playing with each other, they're getting along with each other so, you know, everybody's feeling better about

Importance of children playing together, getting along together themselves, not just because it's Spring, but because I think they can get outside, and they can play with people and they have, what's the word I'm looking for, a sense of being someone in some place. You know, they've been here a full year and there's somebody in the school, not just somebody who's been here for a month or two and then gone. (long pause) That's where I think, too, that consistency in educators is important too, and having teachers and administrators and teacher aides, you know the whole staff, and not just the teaching staff, but everybody, who is consistent with the same kind of philosophy in school.

Being someone means being someone in some place

Importance of teachers having consistent philosophy

D: Perhaps I could ask you what you think the role of the elementary school is today.

K: OK. I think it's a changing role right now, because we're finding that we do have kids that have problems, and that academically they're fairly with it but they have social and emotional problems, and that the schools now are having to deal with these problems more and more all the time.

Children today seem academically OK but have emotional and social problems

As you are well aware, the formal goals of the provincial Department of Education are for the emotional, physical, mental and spiritual growth of a child. Well, we concentrate a lot on the mental, and the physical growth, but we tend to leave the social and emotional sort of left-out. Yet education is total, it's not just to one end. And so I think we've identified that home and church aren't going to deal with the problems as effectively as they used to, and so that the role and the responsibility comes back on to the school.

Perception that typically schools have neglected the whole being of a child in favour of academic development

D: Does that mean there's a shift away from a concentration on academics?

K: No, I don't think so. I think there'll always be that concentration on academics, especially the learning process--how to learn, and how to find out things. There is a bit of a push right now in

Academics retain importance

education to deal more with sort of the emotional and social growth, and have that brought out of the regular program, and have sort of a humanistic approach to education. There are, I think, four schools in Williamstown that develop along that line.

(pause)

Yes, I see our role--we've always been concerned with academics and the physical growth of children. That's always been one of the mainstays of education, and I think we're just being more aware of the fact that we have some kids that do have some problems, and that we're trying to help everyone. And if one of the philosophies of a school is to meet the needs of all individual students, or try to meet the needs of all students, then if there are students who have some of these kinds of problems, whether it be emotional or social problems, then we have to accept that as part of our responsibility, and we have to try and deal with it somehow, either by bringing in outside help or having the parents in on conferences, or having a counsellor or a social worker right at the school, which is becoming more prevalent now.

Schools should try to help everyone

Function of school is to meet needs

Children's problems have to be accepted as part of school's responsibility

in collaboration with social workers, etc.

There is a situation in a school not far from us, where they want to get a social worker right in the school because of this problem with low achievers, and the fact that kids are low achievers becuase they've moved around, because they're from single-parent families--those two things are so important. They seem to go hand in hand. And the fact that they've moved around, and kids haven't been able to make the good contacts with other kids and make good friendships and good meaningful relationships, and so they've moved around. And like I say, its' fairly consistent through this whole area here, because you have a very upper middle class, and then the lower, low-rental people. Sometimes they just don't get along. It's not an out and out

For children, moving around and having single parents means children have trouble forming meaningful relationships
Moving deprives children of friendships

way, or anything. But it shows up here at the school. You can just see it. And if that's the situation we're in, well, that's our responsibility.

Schools reflect the broader problems of society

(pause)

D: Could we talk perhaps a bit about some specific situations that you yourself as a teacher get into. For example, can you think of any example, say, recently where you really got mad at a kid?

K: Yes. (chuckle) It's always a real smart kid, meaning by that, a really intelligent boy. But it's kind of funny, because, as for myself, we try to be courteous with one another; try not to put down what people say. You know, you try to do all these things that promote a good feeling of self-worth. And, in fact, you know if you say something--it's your opinion and you're entitled to your opinion and, you know, Joe Blow next to you, if he makes a wise crack, well, you know, it shouldn't upset you. But Joe Blow should sort of wait for a second and think about what he's saying. Well, this is the one individual that sort of gets me upset, because he blurts out without really thinking, or if he does think he's really thought it out well, but just blurts it out. And, of course, he's hurt somebody else's feelings, and as soon as that's happened, I get a little bit upset that he had done that to somebody else. So yes, that's sort of an ongoing task that he and I have, yet he responds very well to different kinds of rewards and that sort of thing. Now he's about the only student, I suppose, that I can get mad at in my class, and the neat thing about it is that if I don't take the first thing that comes to my mind, and I think it's good, because he's done the same thing, I think we're sort of similar in personalities (laugh) --I haven't really studied it that much, but if I come back and say something to him immediately, he immediately goes on the defensive, and so we have a little conflict right away. However, if I come back and give him some subtle little

Values valued for children: courtesy, self-worth, freedom of opinion

Adult/teacher gets upset when child violates what is valued by adult, especially respect for others' feelings

Child and (adult) teacher have an ongoing task together

Recognition that the child who makes him angry is very much like himself comments, or whatever, he stis and thinks about them for a while, and immediately we've turned the tables a little bit and all of a sudden his question or his comment isn't directed at anybody. Now it's between Larry and myself and all of a sudden, gee, we've got to do some thinking here before we start speaking, and he feels real good about it when it turns out positive for him, and so do I. When it both turns out positive for each other, we both feel like that's like one hundred percent. We both feel real good. And it doesn't happen very often. He's sort of the kind of child that you think has a big mouth. That kind of kid.

His care for this child is apparent in this speech

Grounds for feeling 100% together

D: I sense you feel a kind of closeness to him.

K: Yes, I really do. He's a real neat kid. And I know his family background, so I identify a little bit with him. His mum and dad have split up and so he relates to Dad, who is in Marlboro, and as a result of that, you know, Dad is really the father, the male figure for Larry, and I'm sort of the antagonistic person sometimes, and that's where we have our little conflicts. Oh, I think we see eye to eye more often now. At the start of the year, it was touch and go. I think it's neat to see some growth like that. It gives me a real feeling of satisfaction that I've helped Larry sort of identify the kind of things that not everybody can say and do at free will. Although he's getting this from his father. Because his father says, "Well, if somebody tells you something, you tell him right back." Well, of course, we have little Timmy in our classroom who gets hurt when someone says that sort of thing to him.

Question of where the teacher fits in the family picture

Seeing eye-to-eye with a child

Teacher's values conflict with parent values Creates conflict for child

Yes, as far as anyone in the classroom, I probably feel closer to him, as far as dealing with him all the time.

Dealing with a child often brings one close to the child

D: I certainly found that myself as a teacher, that kids you had the most conflict with were also the ones that at the end of the year you felt something special about.

K: Oh, yes. That's exactly right, yes. Because when you get right down to it, you can talk to him. He's the kind of kid who intellectually is very stimulating. And so, you know, you can take it at that point and go through the kinds of things that you want with him.

When an adult gets right down to it, s/he can talk to a child

D: What about kids that you just don't notice. I think that, as a teacher, mostly with the 'average' kids, they just go along from day to day, and you don't think about them too much.

K: Yes. Although we try, when you've got a class of 27 kids, it's ....

D: What grade is that?

K: Grade five. You like to make each one feel special in some way, you know, somehow. That they're a special person, in this classroom.

Wanting to make each child feel special in this place

I used to do different things. I used to have interviews with my kids. Sit down after school and have interviews. I'd interview them. And then we'd end up just talking a little bit, you know. And they thought that was pretty neat. And they looked forward to, "When's my turn?" And it got so that, you know, I was asking relatively the same questions to everybody so when they got around, they had all these answers ready. (laugh) So then I stopped that for a while and after they had forgotten about it, I started it again. It was just sort of, like, remote control. You just press a button and out comes the answer. (laugh) There wasn't really much thought in it.

Children look forward to being interviewed by an adult

Children have answers ready

Adults laugh at the things children do

But I know what you mean by just sort of the average kid, who sort of gets, you know ... we do things for the low kids, the kids that need to be pulled up. And we do things for the high kids, you know, we enrich them as much as possible, and the middle group just keeps on going. And, you know, that's the group too that you think, "Well, they can do it. They don't need all that special attention right now." And yet, if they've been going through six, seven years of school, they've been lacking all that special attention for six or seven years.

Average children often do not get special attention

Ann and I were talking about that recently. What are we doing for the average group, who don't necessarily get all the remedial help, all the enrichment help. What do we do for them?

What do we do for average children?

D: So, we talked about the conflict in what makes you mad. What about the deep satisfactions? What do you enjoy about kids?

K: Well, me personally, I think I enjoy teaching so much, because kids are so different. That it's not working on a treadmill or on an assembly line where everything's the same. They're unique little individuals and they have something different to offer, and because you're dealing with, in this case, 27 individuals, that in itself is a real challenge to make it enjoyable. Because I think elementary school has to be really enjoyable and fun. And you have to have a sense that you've really accomplished something, and that you really feel good about yourself. And that, if, as a teacher myself, if I can meet those expectations that I think I should be doing of myself, reach one of those kids, then that, to me, would give me a very satisfying year. And I have had. I felt like I've gotten to almost all the kids. There's a couple that you still can't really get close to, or whatever. Or school is, well, come to school, and get out and play. You're just here, and that sort of thing. But yes, I think that's a goal for me.

Enjoying children because they are so different

Slow response to this question

Perceived necessity of school to be fun

Satisfaction means "getting to" children

I think too, finding the fact that kids start caring for other kids, in the classroom (not necessarily our classroom) but outside of the classroom, in the playground, during phys. ed. time, just before and after school. And that, because I'm teaching those children, if I see those children actually saying, "Gee, I'm sorry I did that" or asking somebody over for the night, or whatever. You know, just being polite and courteous. Those kinds of things. Then that's satisfying to me, because I try to give that model as much as possible. And hopefully that will carry over. And when you see it the odd time in the classroom, well, when you see it happening in the classroom, it really makes you feel good, it's very satisfying.

Satisfaction from seeing children reflect the values one values as an adult

Hoping one's values will carry over in children

D: I sort of get the impression listening to you that your own 'working model' is very concerned with a quality of life, a way of being in the school. Would you say that?

K: Um hm. Yes. It's interesting, we were doing this magic circle thing where everybody listens and everybody has a turn, you sit around a circle and you talk about 'feelings.' And there are some rules to this particular session that you do. And after the session, then you just go back into the regular classroom and do your program. And one boy comes up to me and we were doing something and I said, "Oh, you're interrupting" and he said, "Oh, that's only the part when we're in the session. That doesn't apply now, does it?" You know, I'd tried to make the transfer, and it just didn't work. I think, yes, the things that kids are going to carry with them for years to come--because you know when they go to Junior High School they lose all that identity thing. They don't have, like, one classroom, one teacher, and it's a big step. Like when I went through elementary school, I happened to be in an elementary/junior high, where I went right from one wing to another, so there was no real transition. Everyone else in the school went with us too, so, you know, basically you had the same set of friends and everything. And, as far as any kind of unsettling as far as going to a new school, or trying to fit in, there wasn't that problem. I can never remember encountering all these little conflicts that we have now. Maybe I wasn't aware of them, but you know, we sure

Children make a distinction between school life and real life

Children carry things with them

The value of maintaining the same set of friends as a child didn't have that many fights in our playground, or things that happened like you see happening here. So we're looking at when they leave here they'll have some of the knowledge and skills to carry them through to make them real strong individuals. Because that's a pretty tough world when you get on to Junior High and that, you know, they're bussed away over here, they're bussed away over there, and you know, they're away all day. For some of them, especially like in grade six, that's a tough thing to handle. And if we can give them some real good, strong, sound basis here at the school, I think we've accomplished our task.

Wanting children to be strong individuals

School bussing creates a tough world for children

Our task as adults (teachers) is to give children a strong basis

D: We talk about, especially at the elementary level, about kids, and say "my kids" or "my children", or whatever. Do you see a difference between boys and girls, or do you make that distinction?

K: The kids make more distinctions than I do. You'll often say, for example, "Line up", or whatever, and they just line up 'boys' and line up 'girls." You didn't say anything but just "line up!" And so, the kids make their own distinction. Yes, it really is, you know. We do things like even come down to an assembly, and they'll all be coming down, and we'll just say, "OK, sit down", and all the girls sit together and all the boys sit. (laugh)

Children themselves make a distinction between boys and girls

Children make adults laugh

D: Is that something they've learned?

K: I don't know, I'd never really noticed that before in previous years. It just seems to be, maybe, this, my class, or this group of students, that identify more that, you know, girls want to be with the girls now more, because in grade 3 and 4, everybody seems to play with everybody else, and now all of a sudden, some of these girls are maturing, some of the boys, they just want to play by themselves and not want to have anything to do with girls. Yet, myself, I don't mention anything. I say. "Let's really mingle it, mix it up", you know, and the activities that we do are mixed activities, you know, "here's your partner", or here's a group of activities with boys and girls in each group. But the kids make more of a distinction than I do. And it's really noticeable all the time, in whatever they do. And I think that's just part of growing up for them right now.

Children self-assign their sex roles

I don't think there's anything wrong with that. We found, I found, in my class a couple of boys and girls who are really close friends. But they don't call themselves girlfriend and boyfriend. Rather, "My best friend is ...." I found that out through these interviews that I was having. I would ask, "Who would you choose as your best friend?", or, "Who is your best friend?", and a lot of times, a student would choose the opposite sex, but they wouldn't come and tell you that or purposefully go over and play with him or choose him as a partner. But outside the school setting, you see these kinds of things more.

Boys and girls can be really close friends

(long pause)

D: Are you fairly encouraged by what you see happening at, say, the head office of the School Board. I'm trying to get at the question of whether you see leadership coming anywhere in education; I don't just mean there, the School Board --(K. laughs) or do you feel that changes in education are basically just grass roots things that teachers sort of work out on their own, and so on, and that what happens up at the universities and so on is ....

K: That's a pretty big question, pretty big statement. I think leadership starts at the student/teacher level, and through that area, and through co-operating teachers. And as a result of that is developed through the school itself, the climate of the school, the administration that you have in the school.

Educational change begins at student/teacher level

We're in a situation right now where we have a reorganization of our school board. I don't know if you're aware of that or not. Now we have a decentralized budget, so that schools themselves can plan their own budgets.

Sorry, I'm just a bit confused about what you mean by leadership.

D: Well, after hearing you speak of your philosophy of education, I was thinking that that isn't something one would have heard a teacher say ten or fifteen years ago. And I'm just wondering where does that come from, where does that switch come from? Is it through Education courses, or through the general transition of the culture generally.

K: I wasn't teaching ten years ago, so I don't really know. I think it's maybe through the transmission of the culture. Because I can't pick out any specific individual that I modelled my teaching style or the way I teach after. I can think of a group of individuals or a group of people that I've taught with for the last four years that have helped bring about my kind of thinking. That we all sort of had ideas of the ways in which we wanted to do this. The kind of teaching that we like to do. And because ....

D: Now these people, would they be in school?

K: Yes, they're teachers themsevles. This was is Pinewood school that I taught at. Yes, it was just a real sort of human approach to teaching--that we're not just a person who comes into the classroom and leaves and you don't see any more.

D: Were they all fairly young teachers?

Learning from older teachers

K: Yes, but there were some elderly teachers, fairly elderly teachers too, who had been teaching for twenty-five years. It was an interesting blend. I think that's when I developed my own style of teaching, because we had a mixture of teachers who had been teaching for twenty some years in the same grade, even classroom, and yet still weren't stagnant, they kept on growing, and an influx of new teachers, and then some that had been there seven or eight years. So there was quite a mixture of staff. And the younger teachers had their own ideas and ideals, and were accepted by the older teachers who had been on staff. And they were willing to even try some of these ideas themselves. And I think, because of that, and having strong individuals as staff members that I taught with, they were strong in the fact that they really believed what they were doing was a good idea, and good thing, and that carried over to me.

Teachers have ideas, ideals

Importance of teachers believing in what they're doing

So I can see that there was maybe a group of five or six teachers that I identified with and myself, you know, we sort of thought along the same kinds of lines. Plus, I think when I taught over in Australia that was a real eye opener too because that was a different system altogether. Theirs was a very traditional system, very strict, and authoritarian, and having student-taught and all this kind of stuff, and you go through our system, well, it's not like that, it's just not that--the headmaster just doesn't walk around with a cane in his hand and this sort of thing, you know, and if you're out of class--Bump! You'd better have a note. And you know, it was a threatening kind of thing. It wasn't a real enjoyable, relaxed working atmosphere. So, as an educator going over there, who had these different ideas and ideals about teaching, the students themselves thought, "My gosh! What's this guy doing? What an inconsistent, weak teacher, because he's not, you know, shoving force down our throats." (laugh)

Students/children have expectations about adult behaviour

D: Is that what you experienced?

K: For a little while, yes, you know, because I'm a very relaxed type of teacher. I don't pressure the kids, and it's not a hyper situation, eh. And so, after a couple of months they appreciated this and they understood exactly what we were doing and the fact that you don't have to call me "Sir!" all the time, and you know, you're just as much a person as I am. And once we got through that little bit of deal, then it was fine. Teaching didn't matter. But it was kind of a funny situation, because here you have a traditional system and then you have sort of a more progressive coming in, meeting with some of these traditional ... even the teachers themselves accepted a lot of the .... There just seemed to be a clash, a lot of the times. But it was good experience. I'll never forget it! (laugh) And I certainly enjoyed it. It was an enjoyable experience.

Establishing agreement with children, equality

A good experience has conflict

D: I grew up in Southern Africa where it would seem there are a lot of similarities. A heavy emphasis on authority and everybody knowing their place.

K: Oh, exactly. Like, even as far as administration staff. Like, you know, you felt like you were almost in a threatened position because the Principal, his assistant, and the staff really ran the show. Just all 'A-1' decisions and nothing else. (laugh together)

Unquestioned authority creates threats

If you want to sum it up, as far as my feelings about kids and how I'd like them to feel about other kids, is that if I come on to you real strong and boss you around, you're going to end up coming on real strong to someone else and boss them around. And somewhere down the line, someone's going to say, "Hold it. You can't do that to me. I don't have to do that." Now some kids can take that sort of thing, and as soon as that one child says, "Look, you can't do that to me", then you can't do that sort of thing to them any more. And, it's just all kind of positive things that you want to try and do. And that's what I try and do. I think I sort of look at 'academics' as almost secondary but place a lot of emphasis on it, but ....

Children live as they are lived with, with adults

Children have a natural sense of justice

D: So, that's really a question of how one breaks the vicious circle of instinctual responses. And also it seems to me,

Searching for the essence of previous speech there's a deeper question too, of how one goes beyond what may be simply given to you as a way of behaving. And even as a teaching model and as a culture.

K: Right.

D: That now becomes a very important question that I'm really trying to explore, that is it something in children themselves that cause us to want to, say, in terms of education, I mean, up until recently, education seemed to be fairly simplistic. You went in there and you taught kids, and they did what they were told.

K: Exactly.

D: But now that's all changing, and I'm wondering if it's changing because of a recognition that you simply can't operate that way with children. That either they become completely inward and repressed, or else they become hostile. I don't know whether you saw that program on TV a couple of nights ago, about violence in American schools. Many schools in Los Angeles, for example, have armed guards patrolling the halls.

K: The idea that "I'm here to teach and you're here to learn"--I know a lot of people who say that if I can just get rid of all these discipline problems and get down to teaching, boy, we could really learn a lot. Well, hold it now. We're not here just to learn. We're here to develop kids through various .... Well, that's my philosophy, that's for sure. I think that's becoming more and more the trend.

Problems with children can't be removed from school life

D: A recognition that there's no such thing as a non-learning situation?

K: That's right.

D: The question really is, "What are you learning?" So you may be learning, say, in a tight situation, you're learning that you stick to your place and you don't talk back, and that learning's a one-way street. Whereas in a more relaxed situation, you're learning something else.

K: That's exactly right.

D: It's impossible not to be in a learning situation.

K: Yes, that's right. I see what you mean. I really sympathize with people down in the States right now, with that kind of .... I mean, I teach because I really enjoy it. Now, if you've got to go into some place that's got guards and patrols and that sort of thing, and you're sort of being threatened, I'd sort of question whether or not that's a career I'd want to have in that situation. Here in elementary you're not going to find that sort of thing, but gee, I don't know. It's kind of scary, you know. Because we have big high schools here too, and that sort of thing.

Working with children is a source of enjoyment

# APPENDIX C

# THE PERSONAL LANDSCAPE OF THIS STUDY: AN AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL STATEMENT AND REFLECTION

Three events are interpreted as being of importance to the development of this study's orientation. The first has to do with the writer's own paternal origins; the second with his formal education within a Protestant theological tradition; and the third with his experience of living and working with emotionally disturbed children.

The writer's own father arrived at birth into a set of circumstances which, by any objective criteria, could be regarded as unfortunate. Conceived in Victorian England at the turn of the century, in a moment of passion between an older, married professional musician and a young impressionable girl, the existence of Geoffrey Gordon, though eventually acknowledged within the maternal family, was completely denied to the public at large. His first seventeen years were spent in ignorance of his natural parentage, and under conditions of considerable hardship. At age seventeen, the yearning to know from whom he had come could no longer be suppressed, such that all future plans were dropped in order to concentrate on the search for his origins. Arrangements to meet his father were unsuccessful, but a happy reconciliation with his mother a year or so later, marked, by Geoffrey's own account, a point of personal completion which enabled him to embark on a long and fruitful life. It is notable that after retirement, the mystery of his paternity was still of such a power as to compel him to return to England and search through registry records, archives, newspapers, and networks of acquaintances, in order to, in his words, "tie up some loose ends."

Such a life brings into personal focus many of the issues at the heart of this study. An obvious one has to do with the tenacity of the human desire to understand and come to terms with one's ancestral origins. Through the writer's own paternal history there emerges the hermeneutic sense that to live a human life means to be able to link the present with the past, and that any sense of the future carries with it an ongoing appreciation of what brings one to any given moment.

But a more important issue concerns the study's central question, which is the meaning of children in the lives of adults. The conception and birth of Geoffrey Gordon were greeted by all concerned with shock and horror, and had times been different (more contemporary) may easily have been prevented or circumvented with a minimum of fuss by any variety of technical means. But for this writer, the fullness of his father's later life brings into question that form of thinking which intervenes as a matter of course in the emergent life of any child. What lies at the centre of such thinking, and what implications does it have for the way we think about children in particular and creation in general? Does not the judgement about what a child is become a decision from which, in principal, the potential of any child is excluded? And, axiologically, is not such possible intervention in life-processes a triumph of a particular attitude to creation; namely, that it is better to dominate it than to live with and through it; that to be human means to reduce creation to the categories of a rational, calculating human judgement; that mystery is to be dispelled at all costs, or held at bay; and that to know means to know in advance?

Such questions lead to consideration of another event in the writer's life which has bearing on this study. Following a degree in liberal arts, three years were spent in a Protestant seminary, studying ecclesiastical history, biblical exegesis, and philosophical theology. During that time the writer became increasingly struck by the contradiction, now understood to lie at the centre of the Protestant tradition, between an espoused theology of incarnation on the one hand, and the form which the theologizing takes. In brief, the question arose for the writer as to how a theological tradition rooted in a belief in an incarnate Word, an embodied Word, could be in its own practice so profoundly disembodied. Theological truth seemed to be understood largely in terms of correct argument, as distinct from a form of life. In personal terms, the question arose as to how one could be so correct, theologically speaking, could do so well as a student of theology, and yet experientially know oneself to be so devoid of those very qualities of which one was speaking and writing--qualities of grace, forebearance, and love.

In retrospect, such a condition does not seem so difficult to understand. For it is now more clear that, historically, Protestant theology finds its distinctive character in the revolt against the body, broadly understood, and in the emergence of rationalism and the rise of science. Just as science displaced the heart with the head as the centre of epistemic authority, so too theology after the Reformation became an affair of words, a disembodied theology of the Word (there is no body hanging on a Protestant cross) whose authority was to be found in correct exegetical procedure rather than within the living corporate community of the redeemed.

To speak in this way draws attention to the historical links between theology on the one hand and phenomenology and hermeneutics on the other. It has been a point of interest to the writer to note how many of the early central figures began (Brentano, Dilthey) or continued (Schleiermacher) as theologians. Similarly, the impact of Heidegger on modern theology has been enormous, just as Gadamer is assuming an increasingly important role in reflection on theological method. The dialogue between theology and phenomenology/ hermeneutics finds its life, for this writer at least, in a mutual reaction against scientific rationalism, and an affirmation of lived experience as the authentic locale of a more full-bodied understanding of the human world. But even more, both hermeneutic inquiry and a genuinely catholic theology (in Greek the word "catholic" means "in respect of the whole") may be understood as finding their motivation in showing the Word made flesh; in revealing the Word *in* the flesh (Gadamer makes this point in *Truth and Method*, 388). In many ways, hermeneutic reflection, particularly in the exercise of its poetic function, is similar to a form of theologizing. That is, there is implicit in the art of hermeneutic writing an assumption of the possibility that the Logos dwells in the mundane, and that the hermeneutic project is to show it. Thus it may be that much of the interpretation undertaken in Chapter IV of this study has an emphatic quality which in its original sense means precisely "showing the inside" (Greek *em-phaino*). But hermeneutic showing is not a neutral art, nor is it merely a form of rhetoric. It springs from a belief in an incarnate Word which is recognizable in the world--not as disembodied, formalized, abstracted word, but as Living Word. Hermeneutic showing seeks to show the Word that is alive, recognizable in particular qualities and forms of human life. Hermeneutic art is a divining of that which gives life to the world.

In the late 1960's, the writer spent a year living and working in a residential centre for emotionally disturbed children. The children ranged in age from five years to early adolescence, and had all been referred to the centre as a last resort because of the severity of their difficulties. Most had been badly abused at home, and for some this was compounded by neurological disorders such as cerebral palsy and other forms of brain damage.

The centre was in its infancy when the writer joined the staff, and all staff members were young and idealistic, most being fresh out of university with degrees in social science. Within a short period of time we learned some very important lessons. Perhaps the most important was that no matter how wonderful we thought the formal treatment programs established for the children to be, in the end what mattered, what was "effective", depended in large measure on an ability on our part to shed theoretical presumptions about the nature of the children as children, and particularly as "ill" children in need of our help. We discovered that more than anything else what was required was an entering into a form of life with them which acknowledged more what we held in common. In short, what was required was a genuine community, in which all members were prepared to be open to one another and to share the full depth of what each was. Certainly as staff members we found that unless we were prepared to submit to this opening, we could not "get anywhere" with the children. In many ways, this was a painful experience, for it meant acknowledging one's own vulnerability, one's need of others, and a giving up of one's pride in being an expert on children in trouble. What is more, we learned that living with the children in a way which brought us all greater health was never a state at which we could somehow arrive and say, "Johnny is now cured." Rather we became aware of how it was that our health depended on an ongoing conversation, a walking side by side, day by day, learning together how to trust, how to hope, how to dream dreams, and how to pick each other up when dreams didn't work out.

And so it is, in this study, that the most profoundly heard message from the experience of those who also have truly lived with children is that such a life is a full-time job, requiring of parent and teacher a self-reflection which brings about a re-ordering of adult priorities in order to enter into a form of life with children that is indeed a life.

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## PUBLICATIONS

(1) "Learning to Live in the Home of Language: Hearing the Pedagogic Voice as Poetic," Phenomenology and Pedagogy, volume 1, Number 1, 1983.

VITA continued

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